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THE POLITICS OF POSITIVISM AND DIALECTICS: MARX'S THEORY OF IDEOLOGY AND THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR GRAMSCI'S IMMANENT CRITIQUE OF BUKHARIN'S PRAXIS DURING THE PERIOD OF NEW ECONOMIC POLICY IN THE SOVIET UNION

by

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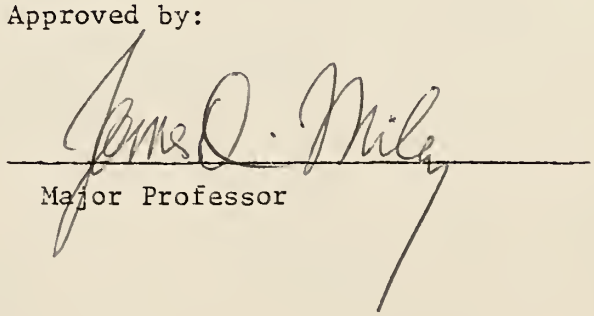

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Ivan Eugene Brown Jr.

1979

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Marx once stated "the ruling ideas of an epoch are the ideas of the ruling class." Many questions of theoretical and practical concern are raised with this statement. The most fundamental question concerns the relationship between ideology and class structure. One must understand the meaning of this essential tenet of marxism, if one hopes to develop a successful marxist revolutionary project.[1] A central theme of this paper is that Bukharin failed to appreciate the dialectical character of marxism. This theoretical error is associated with his failure in praxis during the period of New Economic Policy in the Soviet Union. Marx's theory of ideology will be used therefore as a philosophical base, or better still a starting point, from which I will examine critically Bukharin's praxis during NEP. I rely heavily upon Antonio Gramsci's critique of Bukharin's marxism. In using this critique, I will establish a concrete association between Bukharin's positivism and his failure in praxis during NEP.

The period of New Economic Policy in the Soviet Union began in 1921 with Lenin's substitution of a tax in kind for the requisitioning of grain. It ended abruptly in 1929 with Stalin's all out collectivization drive. Robert Tucker, a foremost scholar in the area, has declared recently that this abrupt turn in Soviet history is best

understood as "Stalin's revolution from above."[2] Other scholars view Bukharin's leadership as a legitimate alternative to Stalin's murderous collectivization effort.[3] The purpose of this paper is to contribute further to an understanding of the discontinuity which exists between NEP and collectivization. Since Bukharin was the recognized theoretician of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, he played a crucial role in the dissemination of socialist ideology to the people of the Soviet Union. The question I hope to answer is: How is the content of Bukharin's theoretical marxism related to the failure of his leadership praxis during NEP?

In general terms, the purpose of this essay is to account for Bukharin's praxis during the period of New Economic Policy in the Soviet Union using Marx's theory of ideology as a base from which Gramsci makes his critique. The essay will consist of four chapters other than the introduction and the conclusion. These chapters include: Marx's theory of ideology; Bukharin's praxis during NEP; Gramsci's critique of Bukharin's historical materialism; and the link between Bukharin's positivism and his praxis. In the chapter dealing with Marx's theory of ideology, I will cast away his Feuerbachian materialism and establish the marxian dialectic. Three related discussions continue in the chapter on Bukharin where I discuss the social context of NEP, Bukharin's equilibrium theory, and his praxis in the 1920's. The chapter on Gramsci's critique of Bukharin deals primarily with a set of notes Gramsci wrote while incarcerated at Turi di Bari by the Fascist Mussolini government. These particular notes deal specifically with

Bukharin's book, Historical Materialism: A Study of Sociology. Also included in this chapter will be a selection of other writings by Gramsci on the Soviet Union. In the next chapter, I will link the party/bureaucracy contradiction discussed in Chapter III with Bukharin's positivism. Finally, the conclusion will consist of bringing everything together in a succinct summary which will entail some rather critical suggestions for liberation movements both within the confines of sociology and the everyday work world today.

Methodology

Generally speaking, this study is a critical examination of a particular historical moment. Critical methodology, if you will, involves the discovery of both the real substance and the illusory form of an historical moment. Each, to say the least, manifest contradictory features which can only be understood as integral to the whole moment. While each gives way to the other, they mutually interact in conflicting manner. The dialectic here is not simply this easily identifiable interaction, but also and I think most important, the form of thought which allows us to see human development in this way. The theoretical concepts used to understand this moment are my constructions. They are not inherent to the period. As afterthoughts, these constructions help integrate the whole of the period, whereas during the period itself, things may seem less clear. Therefore, one should be careful not to confuse the theoretical constructions I use with the actual flow of events during NEP.[4]

In my opinion, the purpose of historical sociology is to identify

a particular historical moment in its contradictory totality. Doing this, however, involves a politicization of history from the political perspective of the sociologist. One can never hope to capture the total essence of an historical period; one does attempt rather to identify the predominant currents of the thought and the most essential concrete manifestations of human action. Intertwined with thought and action is praxis. Praxis is the dialectic. To identify praxis in history is the correct dialectical perspective. Anyone approaching the following material with this perspective should find my historical and sociological reconstruction of NEP and Bukharin's praxis a feasible one. Someone from a different perspective may therefore object to my selected interpretation. I welcome your discussion since such debate is essential in the development of our historical consciousness.

CHAPTER II

MARX'S THEORY OF IDEOLOGY

Introduction

Marx's theory of ideology should first be examined in its theoretical explication and then in its practical implication. Doing this allows us a cushion against which we may test Gramsci's critique of Bukharin's sociology. If the statement "the ruling ideas of an epoch are the ideas of the ruling class" concretizes the whole of Marx's theory of ideology, then it becomes fundamentally important to elaborate the many elements of this proposition. Central to the relationship between ideology and class structure is the mediation of class struggle in forming not merely a more coherent ideology but a specifiable and immediately recognizable class structure. Thus, class struggle mediates the changing class structure of society as well as the articulation of specific class ideologies.

When examining this proposition one must ask at least four questions. These questions revolve around the broadest of inquiry, philosophy, but simultaneously involve the areas of economics, politics, and history. For example, when one speaks of ideas, do we not ask the origin of these ideas and the manner in which they influence human activity? In other words, we must establish the foundation upon which human beings act. On the one hand, human beings act in a particular manner contingent upon the production of life itself, and on the other,

this action confirms the reproduction of life. Through this dual-sided process of production and reproduction of life, an equally important belief system - ideas and ideology - arises. Although this ideology depends upon and is intrinsic to the mode of production, it also re-represents a dual-sided process. On the one hand, ideology serves to reaffirm the process of production and on the other, it disguises the nature of that production. It therefore becomes necessary to establish the linkage between production of life and ideology. Class struggle is central in this linkage.

When inquiring into the mode of this class struggle are we not asking both an economic and a political question? That is to say, when one suggests the existence of a 'ruling class' we must discuss simultaneously the question - what does it mean to rule and particularly to rule as a class? Are we not then suggesting the conscious understanding of the ruling class in protecting its system of economic exploitation through the form of the state? Again these questions represent a dual-sided process. The mode of production of life gives rise to the formation of specific class relationships which are diametrically opposed to one another, and yet must represent a mutual interdependence and identity. How would it be otherwise for the development of human society if there were not both constant antagonism between classes of people and their mutual identity in society as a whole? Indeed, if we do not understand the unity of these opposites, then consideration of only the former would result in obliteration of the human race, and consideration of the latter would result in a classless society. Thus,

the question is economic in the sense that specific class relationships arise in the social intercourse of production. It is political in the sense that these contradictory social relations of production manifest themselves through the struggle for control of the state. Therefore, in discussing the ruling class, ruling ideas, and the state, I will again assert the centrality of class struggle.

The abstractness of the above questions could lead to a positivistic bias unless we properly understand the element of history. By this, I mean that the forms of ideology, class struggle, and state, and the mode of production are all developing historically, i.e., these specific forms change in relation to one another as each develops. And of critical importance to us here is the understanding of the historical specificity of the smychka in the Soviet Union. Therefore, the ideology we speak of represents the specific development of the New Economic Policy and the modes of class struggle which are specific to this period. Thus, history provides us with the practical understanding of theory and therefore permits us to choose how to act--for if "men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please" because circumstances have been "transmitted from the past", then indeed we can choose to make history only to the extent that we act in accordance with past and present circumstances.[1] It is in this spirit that the eleventh of the Theses on Feuerbach was written.

> The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.[2]

Changing the world, however, has not been any simple process. Certainly it hasn't matched the ease of interpreting the world. Marx

left no specific doctrines on tactics, methods and such stuff, although one major tenet of dialectical materialism says human action (or interaction with nature) is itself a process of social change. But this is nothing more than a general philosophic point of view, even though a radical and revolutionary one for the time. When you add the sociological concepts of time and context to the notion of creation, dialectical materialism contains the element of historical specificity.

The development of a new world view, not to mention the arduous task of raising the popular masses of people to that world view, is not complete simply with the organized will of the uprising classes in the form of the state. This organized will must be able to articulate the needs of what are usually weary or segmented classes. It must mold these classes with the new world view in such a manner as to reflect the potential of the economic conditions of the nation. It must bring forth a freshly born nation and establish order in what otherwise would be chaos. This order, of course, reflects the new world view, integrates the polity with new relations of production, and establishes normalacy in the everyday behavior of people. Although experimentation continues, it is done within the framework of a newly established ideology and socio-economic order.

The tasks confronting the Communist Party during NEP were enormous. Not only did they have the technological/scientific details of heavy industry to deal with, but they had the problems of enjoining the peasantry to the world view of socialism. The latter task alone proved to be the major organic hurdle during NEP. A hurdle, I might

add, which was only overcome with the annihilation of the peasantry as a class by "Stalin's revolution from above". That is not to say the collectivization drives were the only feasible alternative, for then history loses all trace of meaning. Meaningful history is the discussion of relevant alternatives. Alternatives are praxis, the human construction of society; history is alternatives and thus history is praxis. Bukharin's alternative is the one which especially interests us here.

The Philosophical Element

Marx states in The German Ideology:

> Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process. In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises.[3]

At this stage of his development Marx had not advanced his theory beyond that of the vulgar materialists he so ruthlessly criticized. The German Ideology presents a theory of ideology which is but a mere reflection of matter. This creates several problems. If human beings can consciously interpret history, i.e., if we can discover the rationality of history which on the surface appears all too irrational, then

human beings have a consciousness. This consciousness cannot be merely a reflection of matter but rather a consciousness of equal importance to matter. Human discovery can only be understood then to mean the conscious interpretation of matter for human needs. Just as matter develops and changes, so does our consciousness. Matter and consciousness thus come together in practical activity. This is what Marx means when he says, "circumstances make men just as much as men make circumstances."[4] Although this quote is also taken from The German Ideology, Marx does not develop it to the extent of making consciousness of equal importance to matter.

Lichtman criticizes Marx on this point in The German Ideology.

> Marx has attempted to resolve the difficulty of synthesizing "reflection" and "inversion" by producing a simple copy theory of knowledge, and then adding the twist of negating the copy. It remains a picture theory. Crude empiricism holds that knowledge is a copy of reality; Marx holds, in this analysis, that ideology is a copy of reality, but one that has been reversed.[5]

Mepham similarly criticizes the vulgar materialism of Marx in this quote and adds two more criticisms. First, he argues that the metaphors used by Marx confuse the nature of what he is trying to say. Second, he finds an element of positivism in the early Marx. Both Mepham and Lichtman argue that contemporary marxist theory and practice suffers as a result of the relatively undeveloped nature of the marxian system in The German Ideology.[6]

This critique of Marx (with which I agree) represents neither a total rejection of the early Marx nor an argument that there exists a fundamental break between the early and later Marx. Rather, it suggests

a fundamental unity in his thought which is treated systematically in later years. The relation between thought and matter, i.e., the philosophical element, can be found in a passage from the first volume of Capital.

In Capital, Marx rejects the simple "copy theory" of knowledge, and argues instead the dialectical unity of thought and matter. This unity still expresses itself in practical activity, and thus we see the continuity in Marx's thought.

> A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect, in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labor-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the laborer at its commencement.[7]

Here Marx points out much more than the difference between human beings and bees. He is arguing that the unity of human essence comes about in the dual process of thinking and action, of imagination and construction, of consciousness and matter. And these dual elements only come together through the conscious effort of practical activity exerted upon nature, and for human needs.

The Economic and Political Elements

The second and third elements of the proposition, i.e., the economic and political, concern the concept "ruling class." This concept is related to the philosophical question of the relation between thought and matter, ideology and production, in the sense that it brings together the contradictory nature of production, and elevates the contradiction

to a superstructural level. At the superstructural level, then, the contradiction manifested in the structure of production takes shape as a contradiction between two classes: those who rule and those who are ruled.

Edward Andrew puts it quite succinctly:

> Classes, then, are basically economic relationships, not in the utilitarian sense of economic as the means of life, but in the sense of production of life. However classes are not, for Marx, just relations of production; they also have ideological and political dimensions.[8]

Again we will distinguish between the early and later Marx.

In The German Ideology, Marx states:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance.[9]

It would appear as if Marx is arguing that the ruling class controls the ideas that permeate society. If this were so, then it implies the passive acceptance of these ideas by the working class. In other words, Marx distinguishes between production and ideas, and therefore argues that the only linkage between the two is the ruling class which disseminates these ideas to the rest of society. In The Communist Manifesto he argues nearly the same thing, but we get a clearer picture of the nature of ideas.

> Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class....What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.[10]

The picture presented here suggests the following: that the ideas of the capitalist epoch are the ideas which correspond to the production and reproduction of capital; therefore, it is not the capitalist class which produces ideas but the bourgeois society; and thus, since the capitalist class is the ruling class and since they own the means of production, the ideas of this age also belong to them. Now this is not to argue that the working class does not help to reproduce the ideology of bourgeois society, but rather to indicate the class which benefits from these ideas. Neither is it my intent to argue that the capitalist class does not control the means by which bourgeois ideology is transmitted to the whole of society. Nor will I argue that they do not consciously use every institution in society to defend their interests as the ruling class. On the contrary, I merely point to the fact that bourgeois society produces these ideas. And although they are in the interests of the capitalist class, these ideas have their origin in the actual life process of production. Bourgeois ideology, expressed in one of its present forms, consumerism, may appear autonomous from the actual day-to-day production process. It is, however, the ideological presentation of social relations in capitalist production. The ideology of consumerism provides artificial (or illusory) meaning to the meaningless and

alienating aspects of capitalist production. It integrates our day-to-day behavior into the social relations of capitalist production and thus disguises the contradictory nature of that production. Since the working class acts within the context of this production, they share to some degree the production of ideas. This is not to argue the passivity of the working class, but only to indicate that working class struggles within the confines of bourgeois production and its various legal forms, help to reproduce the dominance of bourgeois ideology. As John Mepham states:

> To say that the bourgeoisie produces ideas is to ignore the conditions that make this possible, to ignore that which determines which ideas are thus produced, and to conceal the real nature and origins of ideology. It is not the bourgeois class that produces ideas but bourgeois society.[11]

The class struggle taking place in the process of commodity production, i.e., determinant class relations based upon a constant antagonism between those who sell their labor power and those who employ capital, links itself via the fetishism of commodities to the state and whole of society. Commodity fetishism disguises the substance of capitalist social relations. Instead of conflicting class relations manifesting openly in the superstructure, political leaders of the ruling class speak of the "nation's common good", a good which essentially denies working class interests. Commodity fetishism thus disguises class struggle. This struggle then produces the various forms within the superstructure and thereby carries the fetishism with it. Thus, class struggle establishes the linkage between production and ideology. In the third volume of Capital Marx argues this point.

> The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labor is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element. Upon this, however, is founded the entire formation of the economic community which grows out of the production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form. It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers - a relation always naturally corresponding to a definite stage in the development of the methods of labor and thereby its social productivity - which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding form of the state.[12]

The centrality of class struggle at the production level thus determines the form of class struggle throughout the social structure. That form is political, according to Marx. Lichtman concludes "the concrete form of ideology embedded in the extraction of surplus labor will permeate and determine the nature of consciousness in the 'entire social structure.'"[13]

Whereas in the early Marx it seems as though the ruling class simply controls ideology, he now argues in Capital that class struggle determines the form and content of ideology and the state. Because Marx argues the dual-sided nature of class struggle, i.e., at the level of production which determines the form of the state, and the manifestation of that struggle throughout the rest of the social system which reacts upon the struggle going on in production, his argument becomes more powerful. It is powerful in the sense that (1) it can better explain the nature of ideology and (2) it informs conscious revolutionaries of the appropriate tactics necessary to overthrow bourgeois hegemony. For example, Lenin correctly recognized the permeation of

bourgeois ideology, when he argued in What Is To Be Done that "the spontaneous development of the working-class movement leads to its becoming subordinated to the bourgeois ideology."[14] Thus, working class struggle confined to the arena of labor union negotiation remains within the boundaries of bourgeois hegemony. The reason of course has to do with the nature of production - its illusory visibility and the subsequent spontaneous revolt of the working class to it.

It is, therefore, necessary to explain how bourgeois ideology is intrinsic to the nature of commodity production. Marx powerfully demonstrates this point in his chapter, "Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof," from the first volume of Capital. In locating the source of ideology, Marx distinguishes between the substance and the form of commodity production. For example, the substance of a commodity is its use-value, which represents utility in the quality of differentiated labor. The form of the commodity is its exchange-value, which represents the quantity of abstract human labor contained within it. When commodities are thus exchanged, and they can only be exchanged when there is a universal equivalent for exchange, i.e., money, the embryonic social relationship of society establishes itself in a fetishism. This fetishism disguises the essential character of human relationships by making the exchange of commodities appear as social relations rather than relations between things. Thus, human relations establish themselves only through the exchange of commodities, and therefore, immediate perception gives rise to an ideology.

> A commodity is therefore a mystical thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour: because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible to the senses....This is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things....This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.[15]

Marx correctly locates the linkage between production and ideology in the actual life process of production and exchange of commodities. He doesn't separate the two and thus in Capital, ideology is no longer a reflection of matter but bound to the labouring process. Ideology produces production just as much as production produces ideology. Mepham states "the function of ideology is to keep hidden the real social relations."[16]

> ....the theory says that it is a feature of social life and in particular the life of social production, that it is so structured as to render that social reality sometimes opaque to its participants. The invisibility of real relations derives from the visibility of outward appearances or forms. The apparent immediacy of these forms obscures their mystificatory character.[17]

Due to the nature of commodity production and the consequent invisibility of real relations and visibility of forms, ideology permeates the social and political institutions of capitalist society. However, to understand the dynamics by which ideology is transferred to the superstructure of society is to understand the nature of ideology, and thus, the meaning of this statement by Marx:

> "But every class struggle is a political struggle."[18]

Historical Element

In the introduction to Marx's great uncompleted work Grundrisse, he lays the groundwork for his method of analysis. As he outlines this method, he critiques the mechanical and positivistic political-economists. They make the mistake of looking at reality in its present form without considering the fact that humanity, human society, and culture are historically developing. They therefore only see outward appearances and are thus caught in the narrow bourgeois trap of ideology. They never look beneath the surface of reality, i.e., the form, to discover the substance of specific and historically developing society.

> Whenever we speak of production, then, what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development - production by social individuals. It might seem, therefore, that in order to talk about production at all we must either pursue the process of historic development through its different phases, or declare beforehand that we are dealing with a specific historic epoch such as e.g. modern bourgeois production, which is indeed our particular theme. However, all epochs of production have certain common traits, common characteristics. Production in general is abstraction, but a rational abstraction in so far as it really brings out and fixes the common element and thus saves us repetition. Still, this general category, this common element sifted out by comparison, is itself segmented many times over and splits into different determinations. Some determinations belong to all epochs, others only to a few. (Some) determinations will be shared by the most modern epoch and the most ancient. No production will be thinkable without them; however, even though the most developed languages have laws and characteristics in common with the least developed, nevertheless, just those things which determine their development, i.e., the elements which are not general and common, must be separated out from the determinations valid for production as such, so that in their unity - which arises already from the identity of the subject, humanity, and of the object, nature - their essential difference is not forgotten. The whole profundity of those modern economists who demonstrate the eternity and harmoniousness of the existing social relations lies in this forgetting.[19]

While looking for the most general characteristics of production throughout history, the positivists eternalize capitalist production. They forget the historical specificity of all epochs and thus they flounder in superficial analysis. To discover the specific relationships involved in any epoch is to discover the system which lies behind the forms so readily present in everyday life. The historical element in Marx's theory of ideology makes history relative. It grasps the substance of an historical moment, rather than glossing over it in some attempt to eternalize social relations. It grasps the discontinuity of an age and thus provides a basis for a meaningful revolutionary project. Without this meaning we are but passive observers of the historical process.

The Totality of the Capitalist System Through Class Struggle

The unity of the relationship between matter and thought is realized in practical activity, praxis. Both have their origin in practical activity. Matter, therefore, is not inanimate but the technological part of the forces of production. Thought, therefore, is not passive reflection of this matter, but the active manipulation of it. The ideological component takes form in the entirety of society in general and the state in particular.

Class struggle within the production of commodities links the ideological component of production to the state and thereby transforms that struggle into a political struggle. This political struggle consists of two classes of people who stand diametrically opposed to each other - the capitalist class and the working class. It is here that the

battle for domination takes form. The battle is for control of both the state and ideology. Therefore, the rulers, those who own the ideas of an epoch, stand in opposition to the ruled, those who are fighting for control, who are making the new society, and consequently those who will control the new ideas.

The history of an epoch is just as much the history of its ideas as it is the history of its material production. We thus consciously understand the changing nature of production and ideology. This historical consciousness allows the revolutionary to develop meaningful praxis. Lichtman sums up quite well the totality of capitalist production.

> I think it is clear that throughout the entire analysis of fetishism in Capital, Marx treats the mystification of consciousness as intrinsic to the form of capitalist production. The position of The German Ideology is transformed. It is no longer merely the case that economic power confers power over intellectual production wich is 'falsified' for the purpose of social control. The account is now much more profound. Ideology is generated out of the mode of production itself. And because the nature of exploitation that is crucial to the mode of production reveals how and why the capitalist class makes use of its power over intellectual production. The capitalist class institutionalizes consciousness as it does because it must. The fetishism originating in the commodity form is transmitted throughout the remaining social institutions, affecting each in a distinctly relevant way. Each institution in the structure of the hierarchy provides its own mystification.[20]

From Theory to Praxis

Moving from theory to praxis is not a simple linear equation but rather a complex and difficult process. Praxis should be as much differentiated from theory as theory is from reality. As the unity of the abstract and concrete, praxis represents human will attempting to achieve certain effects within a defined structural limitation. These effects are qualitatively different from both theory and reality, owing

to the fact that the goal of praxis is ultimately to transform reality and hence theory.

Praxis evolves continually in the on-going struggle of political-economy. In this respect, the praxis of a subordinate class during periods of relative harmony will differ from the praxis of the same group in times of crisis. Furthermore, if the subordinate group becomes the ruling group, as is the case in this investigation, their praxis will differ equally as much from previous forms of praxis. Since this is our case, perhaps a few comments about Bolshevik praxis during NEP will benefit the reader.

On the one hand, praxis cannot rely primarily upon structural changes in the political-economy of a nation. Structural changes include a realignment of class forces in production (as well as the dependent technological innovations introduced after the revolution). After the October Revolution, the major class realignment, of course, was the proletarian alliance with the peasantry as expressed in the organized will of the Bolshevik Party through the state. The political-economic structure of the Soviet Union was defined by the New Economic Policy. It was a dual economy where the state (i.e. the alliance) owned large capital industry and the private citizen owned small industry and agriculture. NEP had essentially a public and a private sector; a dual economy. NEP was not therefore a purely socialist economy; neither was it a purely capitalist economy; it was a mixture of both. Bolshevik praxis was directed towards a more complete socialist political-economy under the defined structural limitations of NEP. The attempt to

introduce cooperative and collective farming into the agricultural sector of the Soviet Union was an example of Bolshevik praxis during NEP.

On the other hand, praxis cannot rely primarily upon superstructural changes in the political-economy of a nation. Superstructural changes include the reorientation of social thought, the development of new codes of behavior, and the acceptance of these by the popular masses in their day-to-day activity. In other words, a superstructural change involves the development of a comprehensive new world outlook or culture which integrates the normal behavior of the average citizen into the newly developed social relations of production. As such, it is broad cultural change manifested in various superstructural institutions like education, the family, and the polity. During NEP the Bolsheviks introduced many new ideas which centered around a cooperative and collectivist society. In education, they worked with the problems of literacy. In the family, they liberalized divorce proceedings and equalized male-female role relationships. These changes rely not only upon cognitive, but most importantly, attitudinal acceptance. Unfortunately, the latter is usually the more difficult to achieve. In the polity, however, the Bolsheviks simply took over the existing political structure of the Tsarist regime. Although they recognized this problem, they seemed most reluctant to introduce radical changes into the polity during the development of NEP. In the following chapter, I concentrate on this error.

On the whole, praxis is a dual process which concentrates on

both structural and superstructural change. Again, it is the relationship between thought and matter. Both are equally important, despite the fact that superstructural change is probably more difficult than structural change. Structural change can often be legislated whereas superstructural change nearly always relies upon popular acceptance in the attitudes of the masses. Structure may be forceful, even brutally coercive, but an idea must be subtle to the extent that we actively support it.

In Chapter III, I will examine Bolshevik praxis in more detail. This will involve a rather extensive examination of the structure, as well as the superstructure of NEP. I hope to point out what in my opinion is the decisive contradiction in Bolshevik praxis. I call it the party/bureaucracy contradiction. In further chapters I will identify the association between this contradiction and Bukharin's positivism. As such, I concentrate chiefly upon Bukharin's leadership within the Bolshevik Party.

CHAPTER III

BUKHARIN'S LEADERSHIP PRAXIS DURING THE PERIOD OF NEW ECONOMIC POLICY IN THE SOVIET UNION

New Economic Policy-Legitimation and Crisis: A Framework for Analysis

Gramsci once reflected upon the transition phase in a revolutionary period.

> The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born. In this interregnum the most varied of morbid phenomena appear.[1]

This description is quite fitting for NEP. Indeed, NEP is aptly characterized by crisis. But this crisis is not overtly manifest in the sense that there is the complete absence of political and cultural hegemony. Rather, NEP represents a form of submerged hegemonic crisis in the sense that the existing political and cultural leadership is attempting to enthuse the masses with a socialist spirit. Submerged hegemonic crisis, then, is that period in the revolution where the political and cultural leadership of the newly formed state attempts to enlist the active and willing support of the masses.

Hegemony refers to the active and willing support of the dominant classes as well as the subordinate classes. The intellectuals, whether they are literary, industrial, or political, play a crucial role in the development of hegemony. We will concentrate chiefly upon the political intellectuals in the Soviet Union.

The dictatorship of the proletariat best characterized this

transition period. In the Soviet Union, this dictatorship was the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry (smychka). The political will of the smychka was organized and expressed through the Bolshevik Party. The primary goal of this will was to envelope gradually the spirit of the masses with a socialist ideology. They had to convince the whole of the Soviet Union of its culture and ideas. Again, Gramsci offers a superb summary of this revolutionary process.

> A social class cannot convince others of the validity of its world view until it is fully convinced itself. Once this is achieved, society enters a period of relative tranquility, in which hegemony rather than dictatorship is the prevailing form of rule.[2]

The dictatorship of the smychka, then, is this submerged hegemonic crisis. The process of moving from dictatorship to hegemony is not achieved simply through the prescription of established patterns. It is achieved rather through the on-going struggle of strategy accepted and rejected, of movement forward and backward, and of all the various victories and setbacks. It is, in a word, the struggle for legitimation in the popular will of the masses. When trouble appears in this legitimation struggle, the submerged crisis surfaces in the superstructure, usually the polity. The manner in which the crisis is dealt with is crucial in the development of hegemony. The argument put forward in this chapter is that the Bolsheviks dealt with this crisis in such a manner so as to preclude the successful transition to hegemony. Indeed, Stalin's "revolution from above" represented a coercive and brutal extension of the dictatorship which destroyed the will of the smychka. Stalin's heinous solution to the submerged hegemonic crisis ended the

period of New Economic Policy, as well as any expression of popular will in the smychka.[3]

Marx, in reflecting upon Hegel and the French Revolution of 1848, once commented:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something entirely new, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle slogans and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.[4]

In my opinion, Marx's comment could just as well have been said in reference to Stalin's "revolution from above."

Two major contradictions in the society of the Soviet Union contributed to the emergence of hegemonic crisis during NEP. The first contradiction consists in the alarming cultural differentiation between the proletariat and the peasantry. Although they formed an alliance, the smychka was primarily the expression of Bolshevik policy. Hence, the smychka was a formal will expressed through party activity and not an organic will expressed through the popular and active participation of the masses. I consider this an interparty contradiction since it is a contradictory relation between the party and the masses.[5] NEP, therefore, represents the attempt to overcome this contradiction.

The second contradiction consists in the interplay between the party and the bureaucracy. Discussions about the correct implementation

of NEP, usually referred to as the industrialization debates, created factions within the party. In the struggle to see their ideas implemented, left and right factions appealed to the party through the bureaucracy. This appeal implied a form of ideological conflict within the party which resulted in the creation of ever encircling boundaries around the party. These boundaries were the specific, rational and hierarchical character of the bureaucracy. Furthermore, the implementation of NEP came primarily through the channels of the bureaucracy. During the development and implementation of NEP, the bureaucracy became a mechanical expression of an already formal will, rather than an organic link with the smychka. I consider this an intraparty contradiction, or the party/bureaucracy contradiction, since it involves contradictory relations within the party. It does, however, relate to the smychka since it is the superstructural manifestation of this contradictory relation. Thus, the structural contradiction between the peasantry and proletariat as expressed in the will of the Bolshevik Party manifested in the superstructure as a contradiction between the party and bureaucracy.

The central debate during NEP concerned the question of industrialization in the Soviet Union. The industrialization debates directly affected the laboring men and women who would bring about industrialization. In my opinion, Bukharin's alternative, usually associated with the right in the party, was the only alternative which would have achieved industrialization while preserving and enhancing the alliance between the proletariat and peasantry. Bukharin's alternative failed, however. It is therefore necessary to determine the reasons for this

failure. One major reason which I present in this chapter is the party/bureaucracy contradiction. In subsequent chapters, I argue that there is a positive association between this contradiction and Bukharin's positivism.

The Context for the Industrialization Debates During the Period of New Economic Policy

When Lenin ended the period of War Communism in March of 1921 with the substitution of a tax in kind for the requisitioning of grain, he inaugurated the period of New Economic Policy. This period was essentially a relaxation of the coercive measures used during War Communism when the Soviet Union was threatened with a host of problems, not the least of which was the Civil War. Although not apparent at the outset, the intention of NEP was a long range, gradual transition to socialism. Peasant unrest in the countryside alarmed the Bolsheviks into an explicit recognition that War Communism policies were failing. NEP was the response to this mass disruption.

The effects of the October Revolution and War Communism finally surfaced in the spring of 1921. The structure of agricultural production had suffered during this period. "The effect of the revolution on agriculture was profoundly reactionary" to the extent that "much of the positive effects of the Stolypin reform" had been undone, making "traditional strip cultivation" the prevailing mode of production in the countryside.[6] Under Stolypin, who was the Interior Minister from 1906-1913 under Tsar Alexander, many agricultural reforms were introduced which allowed for greater production of agricultural products.

These progressive reforms were nullified after the Revolution when the peasants returned to traditional forms of production. During War Communism, the Bolsheviks demanded and took from the peasants the necessary grain to feed its army and industrial proletariat (who were producing the necessary war machine). The peasantry reacted with hostility to this coercive policy. A familiar saying in the villages united the otherwise parochial peasantry. "Long live the Bolsheviks, down with the Communists!"[7] You see, the Bolsheviks had won the Revolution which returned their land, but the Communists represented the government which took their grain. The peasants wouldn't tolerate the policies of War Communism any longer. A new relationship with the peasantry had to be found so that the already fragile base of Bolshevik rule could be restored.

The existence of two cultures, one Bolshevik and revolutionary and the other peasant and traditionally patriarchal and parochial, defined the cultural makeup of the Soviet Union at the outset of NEP. In fact, the peasantry had not been converted to socialist ideology.

> It must not be forgotten that Soviet power in the villages was weak, and that traditional peasant communal institutions were in effective command.[8]

The substance of these two varied cultures represents the submerged crisis which emerged sporadically during NEP and finally exploded in its most heinous form with Stalin's "revolution from above."[9]

The Kronstadt sailors rebellion shook Bolshevik power at its roots. Kronstadt had been a bastion of Soviet influence during the Revolution. But in the Spring of 1921, "the sailors rose to demand

the fulfillment of the pledges of October: political freedom for all socialist and anarchist parties, real elections to the Soviets, an end to the oppression of the peasants."[10] Caught by surprise, the Bolsheviks crushed the rebellion. The rebellion delegitimized the Bolsheviks' claim to power, and consequently the search for legitimized rule became a primary goal.

The New Economic Policy inaugurated this search for a restoration of the smychka between the proletariat and peasantry. Coercive policies were proven wrong. The political and cultural tension between the Bolsheviks and the peasants had to be relaxed before major structural changes in agricultural production could be introduced. These structural changes were a primary aspect of the industrialization debates. In this sense then, the debates were as much about achieving hegemony in the countryside as they were about the reform of agricultural production. The Bolsheviks debated this issue within the party. They carried it out through the bureaucracy. In the process, however, they overlooked the growing machinations of the bureaucracy. Emerging from the devastating Civil War, "Bolshevism acquired a social basis it did not want and did not immediately recognize: the bureaucracy."[11] No longer representative of the popular will of the two classes they claimed to represent, the Bolsheviks clung desperately to the only solid social structure to emerge unblemished after the war. The ephemeral features of bureaucracy and party stood in inimical contrast to the ubiquity of bureaucracy at the outset of NEP.

The importance of delineating the nature of this bureaucracy

becomes crucial in understanding the development of the revolution during NEP. Stalin's capacity to overcome rivals, especially in 1929, was not due entirely to his portentous manipulations of positions within various institutional structures of the Soviet Union, although this played a significant role in his final triumph.[12] Cohen notes the importance of the social-psychological factor in Stalin's triumph. Bureaucracy contains its own rules of justification-rationality. When an individual justifies behavior based solely upon rationality, leaving aside the implicit moral questions involved in human behavior, they develop a sense of cynicism which may easily be translated into a form of elitism. In my opinion, this is the basic emotion Stalin relied upon in his triumph.[13]

The differentiation between the proletariat and the peasantry was linked entirely through the formal will of the party. Relations between this will and the smychka were conducted through the bureaucracy. The party represented a potential organic link to unify the contradiction within the alliance. Qualitatively, it could imbue ideological and cultural consciousness to its newcomers, while at the same time it had to grow quantitatively. From March of 1917 to the fall of 1928, the party expanded from twenty thousand to one million, with sporadic purges and periods of growth in between.[14] As the party grew in form, its substance became something different. As Lewin states:

> The newcomers entered a party which was not engaged anymore in fighting tsarism, as the founders were. They didn't share the values and the motivation, the culture and sophistication of the old guard.[15]

Thus, the substance of the party had become a mere quantity, a mechanism losing all trace of organic growth. While the bureaucracy also grew quantitatively, its qualitative features exemplified a "petty-bourgeois mentality", "philistinism", and the usual invidious characteristics of bureaucracy--power, privilege and status.[16]

While the base of the Bolshevik Party was firmly ensconced within the bureaucracy, the struggle for unity exacerbated the contradiction within the smychka. As the party grew, it resembled bureaucracy to a greater extent. As the bureaucracy grew, it increasingly performed the function of policing the party. Establishing organic links with the smychka became a viscious mechanism for increasing the distance between the Bolsheviks and the proletarian/peasantry alliance. The industrialization debates conducted in this context became a virulent source of ideological conflict within the party. Attempting to maintain the crisis, the Bolsheviks precluded any attempt to establish organic links with the symchka. A structural contradiction had manifested in the form of the party/bureaucracy contradiction.

Lenin confronted these problems with sublime frankness in one of his final works: "On Co-operation."

> Two main tasks confront us, which constitute the epoch--to reorganize our machinery of state, which is utterly useless, and which we took over in its entirety from the preceeding epoch; during the past five years of struggle we did not, and could not drastically reorganize it. Our second task is educational work among the peasants. And the economic object of this educational work among the peasants is to organize the latter in co-operative societies. If the whole of the peasantry had been organized in co-operatives, we would by now have been standing with both feet on the soil of socialism.

> But the organization of the entire peasantry in co-operative societies presupposes a standard of culture among the peasants (precisely among the peasants as the overwhelming mass) that cannot, in fact, be achieved without a cultural revolution.[17]

Lenin could not have been more candid in his assessment of the correct praxis for the Bolsheviks in the epoch of NEP. Two things must be done, and they must be done simultaneously. Educating the peasntry would transform traditional agriculture into cooperatives and thereby establish peasant control over socialist production. Explicitly this means a radical transformation of state machinery, and implicitly it means a solution to the contradiction within the symchka. He states further:

> This cultural revolution would now suffice to make our country a completely socialist country; but it presents immense difficulties of a purely cultural (for we are illiterate) and material character (for to be cultured we must achieve a certain development of the material means of production, must have a certain material base).[18]

It was now apparent to Lenin that the epoch of NEP was long term and the tasks were primarily cultural. This legacy was left for the Bolsheviks upon Lenin's death in 1924. It sparked the industrialization debates and haunted the debaters in the years to come. The question remained, though, as to who could most adequately fulfill this legacy. Who, among the Bolsheviks, could correctly interpret this legacy and put it into praxis?

Bukharin's Leadership Praxis and the Political-Economy of the New Economic Policy

The most salient feature of the Soviet Union's economy during NEP was its dual nature: a small socialized sector of large scale industry

and an "overwhelmingly private agriculture, plus legalized private trade and small-scale private manufacturing."[19] In all economic categories, manufacturing, transportation, agricultural harvest, etc., the levels of production were below those of the pre-war era. In 1922-23, 76% of retail trade was in private hands.[20] On the whole, NEP was a period of economic restabilization in which the productive forces of the economy inched slowly towards pre-war levels.

The proletarian/peasantry alliance characterized productive relations during NEP. The smychka was a cooperative relation blurred only by differentiation in the peasantry classes and the petty-bourgeoisie. It was essentially an exchange market infused with proletarian mass production of consumer goods, peasant production of grains, and artisan production of small goods. It was a mutually beneficial exchange system, i.e. the proletariat relied upon the peasantry for the production of food and the peasantry likewise relied upon the proletariat for the production of necessary consumer goods. The petty-bourgeois producer stimulated the market, while at the same time helped "meet the needs of industrialization" by "means of taxes and the price system" imposed by the state.[21] On the whole, productive relations during NEP characterized an attempt to restablilize the declasse proletariat and organize the peasantry into socialist cooperatives.

In 1923, the first indication of submerged crisis surfaced in what is well known as the "scissors crisis." The relations between the proletariat and the peasantry turned against the latter. Distortions

in the economy resulted in "a rapid move in relative prices in a direction unfavorable to the village."[22] Nove locates six reasons for the distorted economy: (1) "agricultural production recovered more rapidly than industry", (2) goods and materials unloaded by state trusts created chaos, (3) "state industry was inefficeint" making costs high, (4) distribution was inefficient, (5) the government sought to purchase bread grain at low prices, and (6) "the inflationary race" hurt the peasants because it took them longer to journey to town to purchase goods.[23] As a result, the peasants stopped purchasing industrial goods. Prices soared even higher until October 1923, when "industrial prices were three times higher, relative to agricultural prices, than they had been before the war."[24] Hence, the name scissors crisis refers to the fact that the more peasants withdrew from the market, the higher the prices went. In 1924, "the rate of growth of large-scale industry" declined as a result of the scissors crisis.[25] Compounding the problem of economic crisis was the emergence of opposition within the party. Thus, the submerged crisis surfaced as political-economic crisis.

At the height of the scissors crisis in October 1923, the left opposition (Trotsky, his supporters, and "members of the former Democratic-Centralist opposition")[26] issued the "Declaration of the 46." It "raised two main issues: the economic situation and the party regime."[27] They felt that the party's inability to deal with economic problems resulted from bureaucratization within the party. While Preobrazhensky was presenting his theory of "primitive socialist accumulation" as a solution to the economic dilemmas, Zinoviev and Kamenev

rallied behind Stalin in official opposition to the Declaration of the 46, which culminated in "condemnation by the Thirteenth Party Conference in January, 1924."[28]

The party/bureaucracy contradiction is apparent in this struggle. While the party could not tolerate factions in the face of the legitimization crisis, it could neither afford the luxury of opening the debate to wider circles within the party. This would have created a deeper schism in their relationship with the smychka. Hence, the party established boundaries within which they could maintain any internal struggles. This process is evident in two related facts. First, Trotsky appealed secretly to the upper echelons of the party in 1923, apparently as a "prelude to broader discussion of the issues."[29] Although his appeal met with condemnation, it was soon opened up to the party, in which concessions on party democracy were made. Second, the party moved to condemn the opposition just a few months later at the Thirteenth Party Conference. It had, in the process, allowed for a certain minimal debate, but in the end the party had successfully established a boundary around itself to maintain internal struggle. As NEP progressed, Stalin became aware of these boundaries, and from his position as General Secretary of the Communist Party, he actively restricted them.

When Preobrazhensky issued his solution in the form of "primitive socialist accumulation," Bukharin reacted quickly and negatively. Although he agreed with Preobrazhensky on the need to industrialize using internal resources, Bukharin strongly objected to the methods which Preobrazhensky advocated.[30] He suggested clamping down upon the peasantry

as a way of extracting the surplus necessary for industrialization. Bukharin criticized this method in political-economic terms. He argued that this would alienate the peasantry and thus weaken the smychka. To counter Preobrazhensky and the left, Bukharin argued that NEP characterized a dual economy, i.e. "relations between state industry and peasant agriculture", and therefore any disturbance of this equilibrium could be devastating.[31] Preobrazhensky viewed industrial development at the expense of the peasantry, whereas, Bukharin viewed the former dependent upon the development of the latter. Agricultural development was not merely composed of increasing the harvest, but of fundamentally transforming the methods used. Bukharin recognized the importance culture would play in this transformation. He repeatedly argued this point in the 1920's.

> We must constantly keep in mind that our socialist industrialization must differ from capitalist industrialization in that it is carried out by the proletariat, for the goals of socialism, that its effect upon the peasant economy is different and distinct in nature, that its "attitude" toward agriculture generally is different and distinct. Capitalism caused the debasement of agriculture. Socialist industrialization is not a parasitic process in relation to the countryside...but the means of its greatest transformation and uplifting.[32]

In practical terms, Bukharin saw the credit cooperative and the market cooperative in the countryside as the means through which the peasant could transform small peasant production into cooperative production. Indeed, it represented a gradual process of change. But more importantly, it relied upon voluntary participation. The peasant would engage voluntarily in cooperative agriculture. Bukharin assumed that a cultural transformation would accompany this voluntary association.

His argument rested upon one major assumption. He assumed, and I think correctly, that voluntary association depended upon an attitudinal change in the peasantry. A peasant could identify cognitively with reasons for joining a cooperative (for example, greater production, greater income), but to voluntarily make the change requires an appreciation, a desire for the cooperative. Appreciation and desire flow primarily from the heart and not the mind. Thus, voluntary peasant association with the cooperative movement required an attitudinal, much more than a cognitive change.

Bukharin continued to view industrialization from the perspective of the peasant. According to his argument, the development of large scale industry depended upon the development of agricultural cooperatives. The long range implications of Bukharin's praxis seem clear. As peasants move gradually into cooperatives, they produce more. The more they produce, the more that is available for feeding their family and more surplus with which to purchase commodities from the city. As well, there would be more grain for the urban proletariat (a well fed work force can produce more). In addition to this, there would be more available grain to sell on the international market (this would bring in the necessary capital for the development of large scale industry). As NEP progressed, the formal will of the smychka would be transplanted by a solid organic will of a conscious peasantry in alliance with the proletariat.[33]

A much larger context defined Bukharin's perspective, however. Again, politics entered the realm of theory in the debate over "socialism in one country." Although Stalin first introduced the notion of "socialism in one country," Bukharin as co-leader of the party developed

the phrase in terms of the smychka. By the summer of 1926, Zinoviev and Kamenev had joined Trotsky in opposition to Bukharin, Rykov, and Stalin. The former group became a formal minority within the party at the Fifteenth Party Congress. Their platform hinged upon the "impossibility of building a socialist society in a single country like Russia."[34] Vicious intrapraty fighting followed. As Medvedev points out, the purpose was not to unite but to divide the party. In Medvedev's opinion, Stalin perceived the subtle implications of this intraparty fighting, and from his position within the party, he actively encouraged it.[35]

Concurrent with the resurgence of political crisis, the "goods famine of 1925" challenged Bukharin's praxis at its heart. As Cohen points out:

> Bukharin's assumption that whetting peasant consumer appetites and commercializing the peasant economy would generate grain sufficient to feed the cities and support industrialization obscured the inherent backwardness and low productivity of Russian agriculture, the primitive, fragmented nature of which had been worsened by the revolutionary breaking up of large surplus-producing estates and Kulak farms in 1917-18.[36]

In 1925, "NEP reached its apogee"[37] prompting Bukharin to re-examine his praxis. Although he remained committed to "NEP forms and market mechanisms,"[38] "he recognized that the Soviet Economy was now facing a transition from the 'period of restoration' to the 'period of reconstruction'."[39] He now saw the need to increase heavy industry and to build capital stock. To do this, however, the peasantry (especially the Kulak class) had to supply a greater portion of their surplus to the state. While remaining strongly committed to "voluntary association,"

Bukharin gradually neared the program advocated by the left.[40] Unfornately, the bitter disputes of years past precluded immediate recognition of the need for unification. Stalin's collectivization as a final synthesis went far beyond the imaginations of both left and right.

In December 1927 and January 1928, the Soviet economy suffered an acute shortage of grain. Measures taken against the Kulak to confiscate grain anticipated the ruthless adventurism of the collectivization drive. At the same time (November 1927), Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the party and in December 1927, at the Fifteenth Party Congress, Trotsky was expelled to Alma Ata. The astonishing correlation between economic and political crisis is a recurrent theme during NEP. But this time, the submerged crisis was partially taken care of by the expulsion of Trotsky. Throughout 1928 and 1929, the grain shortage worsened and party discussion revolved around the possibility of extraordinary measures against the peasantry as a solution.[41] No sooner had Trotsky been expelled than political crisis again emerged. Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomskii opposed further grain confiscations. Anticipating the logical extension of grain confiscation, i.e., terrorist collectivization, Bukharin "warned on 12 September 1928 in Pravda: "If it (the state) takes too much upon itself, it is forced to create a colossal administrative apparatus.""[42] Although Stalin, in his usually contemptuous and vulgar style, ruthlessly criticized what he now labeled the 'right opposition' at the Plenum of the Central Committee of 1929, "Bukharin's group continued to defend its views."[43] Stalin's solution to the submerged crisis came in the form of an all-out violent collectivization drive of agriculture,

and the expulsion (and later, the outright murder) of dissenting voices within the party. He justified this solution with his theory of increasing class conflict as socialism neared.[44]

This final struggle within the party exemplified the party/bureaucracy contradiction in clear form. On April 6, 1928, the "Central Committee gathered in plenary session for the first time since the Stalin-Bukharin coalition had begun to crack."[45] While "the emergency grain measures were defended as a success", the "excesses" were condemned and the plenum's resolutions favored Bukharin and the right.[46] Stalin had apparently suffered a defeat. As Cohen notes, though, this was merely "an illusion."[47] Stalin responded with alacrity. He immediately reassigned party members to different posts and openly claimed that "we have internal enemies."[48] Stalin insisted upon unanimous policy recommendations which were "in a Bukharinist spirit."[49] Stalin's insidious move gave the appearance of opening the party to reconciliation. However, through the vantage of his position as General Secretary of the Party, he moved to further restrict the boundaries of party democracy. Bukharin was all too aware of the situation. Bukharin complained that Stalin's "tactics inside the Politburo...were evasive and deceitful, combining empty concessions and false comraderie but designed "to make us appear to be the splitters.""[50] Bukharin continued his criticism of Stalin's activity within the Politburo. In a conversation with Kamenev on July 11, 1928, Bukharin said:

> He [Stalin] is an unprincipled intriguer who subordinates everything to the preservation of his own power. He changes his theories depending on whom he wants to get rid of at the moment. In the Politburo group of 'Seven', we argued with him to the point of saying 'You lie!' 'You're talking nonsense!' and so on. He has made concessions now, so that later he can cut our throats.[50a]

Within a brief period of time, Stalin had successfully gained the sufficient bureaucratic forces "to oust and replace entrenched leaders loyal or sympathetic to the Right, a process abetted by a decade of bureaucratic centralization and deference to orders from above."[51]

Although Bukharin was the recognized party theoretician, he was defeated by the organizational power of Stalin. Bukharin's intellectual influence can not be underestimated. As Cohen notes, "his writings had been official doctrine for over a decade, educating "hundreds of thousands of people.""[52] Bukharin's strength was "outside the high party leadership and indeed outside the party itself."[53] His strength derived from the lower party apparatus and the popular will of the smychka. Stalin's support, on the other hand, rested within the upper echelons of the party hierarchy. Bukharin's leadership role, however, helped create Stalin's organizational power. Bukharin failed to appeal to those groups where his real strength existed.

> Bukharin's tragedy, and the crux of his political dilemma, lay in his unwillingness to appeal to this popular sentiment. Where the general population was concerned, his reluctance is simply explained. It derived from the Bolshevik dogma that politics outside the party was illegitimate, potentially if not actually counter revolutionary. This was an outlook intensified by the fear, shared by majority and opposition groups alike, that factional appeals to the population might trigger a "third force" and the party's destruction.[54]

Further complicating Bukharin's relationship with his support elements was the fact that "the social groups thought to be most receptive to his policies, notably peasants and technical specialists, were "petty bourgeois" and thus unseemly constituencies for a Bolshevik."[55] Bukharin did appeal, but to the wrong place. Much like Trotsky's opposition in 1923 and 1925, he appealed to the upper echelons of the party. In doing this, Bukharin played into Stalin's hands, since the upper echelons of the party was where Stalin had his strength. He helped Stalin narrow the boundaries of party democracy. The fact that the party's membership had swollen over the years so that it no longer represented "the politicized vanguard of revolution but a mass organization of rigidly stratified participation, privilege, and authority" further complicated the struggle.[56]

In my opinion, one major source for party atrophy during NEP was the content of the education for new members. Since Bukharin was the primary theoretican of the party, he was also the primary educator. Two of Bukharin's publications stand out as introductory educational textbooks: ABC's of Communism and Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology. The positivist persuasion in these books is demanding for the newly introduced communist. The question remains: How is the positivist content of party education related to the party/bureaucracy contradiction? In the remainder of the thesis, I examine this question.

On the whole, Bukharin's praxis in the 1920's reflected a highly voluntary approach, conditioned on the one hand by the dual economy of the Soviet Union, and on the other hand by his theory of equilibrium.

His voluntary approach may be noted in at least three forms: (1) his political writings are a form of praxis in that the ideas he espoused were concretized in specific programs, e.g. state taxation policies; (2) he recognized, as did all Bolsheviks, that the state would play a major role in helping reconstruct the economy during NEP--this is neither brute economic determinism in which superstructural formations are merely a passive reflection of the economy, nor idealistic and militant voluntarism in which such classic but regretable statements like, "There are no fortresses which the Bolsheviks cannot storm" are made; and (3) his attempt, through the above two forms, to convince the party of the validity of agricultural cooperatives based upon the voluntary association of the peasantry. In each case, Bukharin's praxis reflects the legacy left by Lenin.

Those who charge that Bukharin reified the system at the expense of the individual (and he did) have themselves fallen into a curious mystification. They fail to see the connections between theory, praxis, and reality. Some prefer only to discuss Bukharin's equilibrium theory as it converges with the structural-functionalist theories of the West (indeed it does, but that is not the critical point). The critical and dialectical point of view is to see the concretization of theory in praxis under specific structural limitations. Although some writers attempt to carry the connections this far, they only see a direct and linear relationship between theory and praxis. Since Bukharin's equilibrium theory is essentially mechanistic, they argue that his praxis in the

1920's was mechanistic; hence this group converges with the orthodox Stalinist school which fails to appreciate the perplexity of theory and praxis and also fails to include the structural limitations in their "mathematical equation." They mystify their critique by believing either ideas or reality lead directly to specific policy and therefore each school represents a 'vulgar' understanding of the dialectic. They, if you will, vulgarly critique what they presume already vulgar. While their mystification is a self-satisfying adventure into the realms of bogus historical-sociological inquiry, they diverge little, although they would vehemently deny it, from orthodox Stalinism and the various sychophant offshoots thereof.

None of this is to argue that Bukharin's marxism is free from critical examination. On the contrary, the various critiques of Bukharin are in part correct. However, their criticisms are incorrect for three reasons: first, critics view Bukharin's work only on the theoretical level; second, they fail to logically assess his marxism; and third, they fail to see the implications of his marxism. In a word, their error consists chiefly in the failure to examine Bukharin's praxis. Thus far, we have examined the concrete conditions of the Soviet Union during NEP and Bukharin's praxis. We need, yet, to examine Bukharin's theory of equilibrium. It is with this analysis that I fill in the gaps left by other critics.

Bukharin's Theory of Equilibrium

Bukharin's eminence as a leading theoretician was generally

acknowledged within the Bolshevik Party.[57] Despite Lenin's quip about Bukharin's scholasticism and misunderstanding of the dialectic, he still recognized him as the "favorite of the whole party." Lenin's astonishing comment probably refers to (1) Bukharin's penchant for sociological theory which Lenin detested, (2) their disagreement over praxis--most notably during World War One, and over the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty with Germany, and (3) some minor theoretical disagreements about the nature of the capitalist state. If Lenin found any of these problems to be so overwhelming why did he completely welcome Bukharin's Imperialism and World Economy? After slightly over a year of imbittered debate (1915-summer 1917) he completely converged with Bukharin on the nature of the imperialist state.[58]

Shortly after Lenin inaugurated the New Economic Policy, Bukharin published Theory of Historical Materialism, A Manaul of Popular Sociology.[59] Although one can find his equilibrium theory in other works, Historical Materialism focuses especially upon the notion of equilibrium in society.[60]

Bukharin's equilibrium theory weds a mechanistic reading of marxism with sociological theory.[61] On the one hand, the mechanistic reading represents his attempt to overcome the sociological critique of marxism which used an organismic model to explain society;[62] on the other hand, it relies heavily upon "Bogdanov's mechanistic interpretation of the dialectic."[63] Furthermore, the popularization of mechanical equilibrium models in the physical and biological sciences spread to the social sciences.[64] Bukharin found sociological theory to be "the most general (abstract) of the social sciences," something which "explains the general

laws of human evolution" and thus "serves as a method for history."[65] For Bukharin, "historical materialism was sociology."[66]

Bukharin places a great deal of emphasis upon Marx's later works such as Capital and A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, and probably more emphasis upon Engels' popularization of Marx.[67] Although he demonstrates a fastidious knowledge of each of these works, in Historical Materialism he is most concerned with the general sociological question of the relationship between human action and social structure. One of Marx's works which best reflects Bukharin's systemization seems to be A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. In the introduction to that work, Marx states:

> In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or--this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms--with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic--in short, ideological forms in

> which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation.[68]

Unfortunately this quote has led to many distortions of Marx, caricatures in both the bourgeois and socialist camps. Questions concerning social structure and human action, objectivity and subjectivity are raised by Marx in this introductory comment. Gramsci, for example, found a great deal of his own interpretation of marxism in this quote. This suggests that a variety of interpretations are possible, since, as we will see shortly, Gramsci disagreed with Bukharin's interpretation. Bukharin interprets Marx literally, especially the statement, "which can be determined with the precision of the natural sciences." Bukharin makes two mistakes in his literal interpretation. First, he assumes that the same method used in the natural sciences, i.e. positivism, can be used in the social sciences. Second, he assumes that this method can be used to "measure" not only the economic conditions of production, but also the cultural conditions of production. These mistakes are the roots of Bukharin's positivism.

Bukharin's equilibrium theory hinges upon two essential elements of nature, i.e, the environment and human society. He distinguishes between two forms of equilibrium: the external and the internal. While the relationship between the environment and human society characterize the external equilibrium, the whole of human society in relation to its parts characterizes the internal equilibrium. They each manifest contradictions.

> Whether we like it or not, society lives within nature: is therefore in one way or another in equilibrium with nature. And the various parts of society, if the latter is capable of surviving, are so adapted to each other as to enable them to exist side by side: capitalism, which included both capitalists and workers, had a very long existence.[69]

However much we theoretically justify the hostility of classes in society, Bukharin recognizes the reality of class struggle in its moments of equilibrium. The determinate factor and primary causal contradiction between these two equilibriums exists in the relation between the human system and the environment, in the external equilibrium.

> It is quite clear that the internal structure of the system (its internal equilibrium) must change together with the relation existing between the system and its environment. The latter relation is the decisive factor; for the entire situation of the system, the fundamental forms of its motion (decline, prosperity, or stagnation) are determined by this relation only.[70]

Thus, the intensity of class struggle is determined by the external equilibrium. Any critique of Bukharin's equilibrium theory should begin here. Class struggle is not central in Bukharin's theory. It is dependent upon or caused by the external equilibrium. Thus, class struggle does not manifest in social structure but is caused by social structure.

Equilibrium, in Bukharin's view however, remains dynamic.

> Again we emphasize that the law of social equilibrium, that includes antagonisms, contradictions, incompatibilities, conflicts, struggles, and--this is particularly important--that it cannot dispense, under certain circumstances, with catastrophies and revolutions, which are absolutely inevitable. Our Marxian theory is the revolutionary theory.[71]

"Certain circumstances" for Bukharin are the external equilibrium and what Marx referred to as "material conditions for its solution." The inevitability of this "law of social equilibrium" is in Engels' dialectic the unfolding of history and nature.

Human society must first produce if it is to exist. The production of necessities brings human society into contact with "external nature."[72] Production requires the laboring process making "nature... the immediate object of labor."[73] This "immediate contact" of "abstraction of energy from nature is a material process."[74]

> The social relation between men which most clearly and directly expresses this relation to nature is the relation of work.[75]

Thus, the external equilibrium between the environment and the system manifests itself through work. Critically important to understanding this linkage is that it is a dynamic equilibrium, i.e., a changing relation of production and reproduction.

> When human society adapts itself to its environment, it also adapts the environment to itself, not only becoming subject to the action of nature, as a material, but also simultaneously transforming nature into a material for human action.[76]

Bukharin establishes the internal linkage in human society as the "bond of labor."

> The bond of labor is the fundamental condition for the possibility of an internal equilibrium in the system of human society.[77]

Presumably, he distinguishes between "relation of work" and "bond of labor." However, he does not discuss this distinction at all, precisely because he views each in objectivist terms. Marx recognized the distinction when he characterized the former as "sensuous human nature"[78] and the latter as conscious and creative activity.[79]

Bukharin defines society as "the broadest system of mutually interacting persons, embracing all their permanent mutual interactions, and based upon their labor relations."[80] The content of the linkage between society and the environment, Bukharin aruges, is "the system of social instruments of labor, i.e., the technology of a certain society."[81] Furthermore, it represents "a precise material indicator of the relation between society and nature."[82] Since production determines consumption, distribution, and reproduction, any disturbance in the external equilibrium must be located in production. Bukharin establishes three forms of external equilibrium: (1) stable equilibrium in which replacement proceeds smoothly, (2) unstable equilibrium with positive indication in which productive forces are increasing, and (3) unstable equilibrium with negative indication in which productive forces are declining. Thus, in the latter two forms of equilibrium, quantitative fluxuation leads to qualitative changes in the system. Revolutionary changes occur in these periods of crisis.

> Wherever a society exists, there must be a certain equilibrium between its technology and its economy, i.e., between the totality of its instruments of labor and its working organization, between its material productive devices and its material human labor system.[83]

On the whole, the base in society is characterized as "the totality of the production relations...the economic structure of society, or its mode of production."[84]

Bukharin defines the superstructure as "any type of social phenomenon erected on the economic base" including the social and political system (state, parties, etc.), and the manners, customs, morals, religions, philosophies, language and thought.[85] Societal norms represent "conditions of equilibrium for holding together the internal contradictions of human social systems."[86] Norms, therefore, correspond to the "bond of labor" and function to mediate class struggle.

> Therefore, if society as a whole is to endure, there must exist within it a certain condition of equilibrium (though it be unstable) between the material work as a whole and the superstructural work as a whole.[87]

Bukharin's theoretical statement, here resembles Lenin's statement of praxis in his article "On Cooperation." His theoretical orientation undoubtedly influenced Lenin's viewpoint, especially during NEP. However, Bukharin's economic determinism is not repeated in Lenin's work.[88] Bukharin incorrectly imputes a general formula of society to all hitherto existing societies. He fails to grasp the historicist character of marxism. This form of positivism universalizes history.

Bukharin distinguishes between two forms of dynamic internal equilibrium. The first is evolutionary in that "a gradual adaption of the various elements in the social whole" occurs.[89] The second is revolutionary in that a "violent upheaval" occurs.[90] While the cause of the latter form of equilibrium "is the conflict between the productive

forces and the productive relations", Bukharin cautiously notes that not all conflicts of this form result in revolution.[91] He states:

> Therefore: the cause of revolutions is the conflict between the productive forces and the productive relations, as solidified in the political organization of the ruling class. These production relations are so emphatic a brake on the evolution of the productive forces that they simply must be broken up if society is to continue to develop. If they cannot be burst asunder, they will prevent and stifle the unfolding of the productive forces, and the entire society will become stagnant or retrogressive, i.e., it will enter upon a period of decay.[92]

Several questions come to mind concerning Bukharin's statement here, especially in light of our considerations of NEP and Stalin's "revolution from above." First, though, lets put this statement in the context of NEP. During NEP, productive forces were characterized by state owned, large scale industry, and small entrepreneurial industry, as well as peasant owned agricultural production. Productive relations were characterized by supposedly mutually beneficial commodity exchange relations between the peasantry and the proletariat. These relations made up the smychka "as solidified in the political organization of the ruling class." According to Bukharin's theory, the smychka was such an "emphatic brake on the evolution of the productive forces" that it had to be burst asunder or decay would have resulted. To say that Stalin's collectivization drive "burst asunder" the smychka is putting it mildly. Indeed, he pulverized the smychka, in the belief that this would aid greatly in the development of the productive forces. Bukharin's theory, apparently, vindicates Stalin's "revolution from above."

We know, however, that Bukharin stood firm in his opposition to

Stalin's collectivization. How can we explain Bukharin's opposition in light of his apparent theoretical justification? Why does his particular theoretical orientation lend itself so easily to a vindication of Stalin?

The explanation, in my opinion, must be located in Bukharin's theoretical orientation. Bukharin views the political superstructure as a mere reflection of the economic structure. As such, political activity has little autonomy outside that which can be identified as determined by the economy. Bukharin fails to appreciate those forms of political behavior which act upon, and indeed determine, the economy. This error is related to a more general mistake in Bukharin's theoretical view. Since political behavior is determined, then human action is really external to development. Bukharin's emphasis upon the external equilibrium negates the dialectic: praxis has no place in his theory. On the whole, Bukharin's theoretical error boils down to his failure to view class struggle as central in the historical process.

This general point, however, relates soley to his theoretical views and not his praxis during NEP. We know his praxis was highly voluntary, and although he appealed to the wrong place in his struggle with Stalin, he did nonetheless appeal. If Bukharin would have chosen to simply adhere to the dictates of his general theoretical views he would have passively contemplated Stalin's onslaught. Since he actively struggled with Stalin, we must determine why. It is my opinion that we should not interpret Bukharin in such a literal fashion. Again, praxis is not a unilinear equation, but the ongoing struggle. If Bukharin did

not recognize this point theoretically, he at least behaved as if he did. This mistaken literal interpretation of Bukharin's views has led to three other erroneous critiques.

The first and most apparent critique of Bukharin is that his emphasis upon social structure leads ultimately to a capitualation before the forces that be. If this were so, then why did Bukharin in The Economics of the Transition Period, which contained the same equilibrium theory and emphasis upon social structure as Historical Materialism, advocate the ethos of war communist voluntarism? The Economics of the Transition Period was published in 1920 during the period of War Communism. In it he justifies War Communism, whereas in Historical Materialism the most notable feature is the absence of voluntarism. Cohen explains the difference in this manner.

> ...the dissimilar tempers of The Economics and Historical Materialism, an almost quietest tract by comparison, derived in part from the fact that they focused on different periods in society's life: the first protrayed a transitory state of revolutionary disequilibrium, the second the more usual state of equilibriated society. And it is here, in his discussion of equilibriated society, that Bukharin revealed an awareness that any stable, growing society must be a cohesively integrated aggregate, with at least a minimal harmony of its components.[93]

The second and related critique is that Bukharin's equilibrium theory led him to advocate gradualism in the 1920's. While both critiques come from the Stalinist sychophants, the latter was used most frequently against Bukharin. It has two related elements: (1) guilt by association and (2) equilibrium precluded qualitative transformation. In each, the Stalinists associate Bukharin with the right wing of the party. What

this critique ignores is the fact that Trotsky was a mechanistic philosopher and Preobrazhensky used equilibrium theory. Yet both these men are associated with the left wing of the party.[94]

The third critique of Bukharin argues that he was really an anarchist rather than a marxist. While it is true that Bukharin expressed great fear in the development of the imperialist state, what he called the "Leviathan" monster, this should not be construed as anarchism. He did argue that the "first and primary objective of a proletarian revolution should be to assail and totally destroy--in his words, "to explode" or "blow up"—the bourgeois state."[95] Bukharin's theoretical views on the state became a "constituent part of orthodox Bolshevik ideology" with the publication of Lenin's State and Revolution.[96] In light of Lenin's legacy, Bukharin's views remain vindicated, especially if we consider (1) the historical tradition of state over society in the Soviet Union and, (2) Stalin's anti-marxist use of the state.[97]

The proper critique of Bukharin's marxism should account for the failure of his praxis during NEP. Cohen notes Bukharin's support in the lower echelons of the party and outside the party itself. Cohen relates further that Bukharin failed to appeal to these bases of support in his struggle with Stalin. Why? Apparently, Bolshevik political culture disdained politics outside the party on the one hand, and condescended the lower echelons of the party because they were unseemly constituencies for a Bolshevik, on the other hand. For an explanation of why Bukharin didn't appeal to the authentic bases of his support, Cohen's argument is well taken. For an explanation of why Bukharin did appeal to the upper

echelons of the party (where Stalin had his strength), Cohen's argument compliments mine. Cohen argues:

> But the defeat of Bukharin and his allies was due also to their refusal to carry the struggle beyond these councils, where Stalin's power was greatest, to the larger arenas of their own support. They refused partly because they themselves had helped to traduce, and finally expel, the left for these same acts of public "factionalism" and "splitting." Having created a narrow covert politics at the top, they were trapped where Stalin excelled. And there, as even disgruntled Stalinists later complained, they were defeated "not with argument but with party cards," and "strangled behind the back of the party."[98]

The validity of my argument depends upon the concept, party/bureaucracy contradition. This contradiction is a superstructural manifestation of the structural contradiction within the smychka. Bukharin's praxis failed during NEP precisely to the extent that Stalin successfully defined, and confined, legitimate party activity within the upper echelons of the party. In addition, the left helped define those boundaries with their struggles in 1923 and 1926. By the time Bukharin's split with Stalin had become inexorably apparent, legitimate intraparty struggle was defined by tradition and confined by Stalin's conscious manipulations of personalities with the party and bureaucracy. Bukharin's own words lend support for my argument.

> The party and the state have completely merged--that is the whole trouble.[99]

In 1928-29, Bukharin had no where to turn but to the upper echelons of the party. He played into Stalin's hand.

The party/bureaucracy contradiction was not simply a manifestation of a structural contradiction. A key point in my discussion of Marx's theory of ideology was the dialectic between the concrete and the abstract. Thus far, we have discussed the concrete, i.e. NEP and the smychka. We have related NEP and the smychka to the party/bureaucracy contradiction. We have, furthermore, discussed the abstract, i.e. Bukharin's Historical Materialism. Up to this point, only clues of the relationship between Bukharin's positivism and the party/bureaucracy contradiction have been hinted at. Positivism, as an abstract entity, manifested in the form of the party/bureaucracy contradiction during NEP.

This contradiction is, therefore, central in my argument. It was the political manifestation of the concrete and the abstract during NEP. As such, it was the political arena where ideology, culture, and practical programs were discussed and implemented. The party/bureaucracy contradiction was the superstructural manifestation of the class struggle as defined by the smychka and the ideology of positivism. In a word, this contradiction was praxis during NEP.

In the next two chapters I explore this relationship in greater depth. In Chapter IV, I present the context for the politics of positivism and dialectics. That context includes the different family experiences of Bukharin and Gramsci, as well as the different reactions each man had to a similar European intellectual movement. I conclude Chapter IV with a thorough examination of Gramsci's critique of Bukharin's marxism. In Chapter V, I examine Gramsci's immanent critique of Bukharin's praxis. This involves a detailed exploration of the relationship between Bukharin's positivism and the party/bureaucracy contradiction.

CHAPTER IV

GRAMSCI'S CRITIQUE OF BUKHARIN'S MARXISM

The Adolescent Years of Bukharin and Gramsci

Bukharin's Childhood. On September 27, 1888, Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin was born. He was the second of three sons of Ivan Gavrilovich and Liubov Ivanovna Bukharin, both of whom were primary school teachers. From the time Nikolai was five until he was nine, his family lived in Bessarabia where his father worked as a tax inspector. Other than this brief period in young Nikolai's life, he lived in Moscow, Russia's largest city.[1]

Nikolai's parents provided a conducive home environment for the precocious young boy. At the age of four and a half he could read and write. His father, a mathematician who graduated from Moscow University, "devoted himself to the boy's education, and was partly responsible for his becoming one of the most intellectual and broadly educated of the Bolshevik political leaders."[2] Nikolai developed three lifelong interests under his father's influence. First, he loved natural history. He himself described it as "the passion of my childhood."[3] His "collection of birds and butterflies" and knowledge of the area impressed Ivan Pavlov, "another amateur enthusiast" with whom Bukharin enjoyed a warm friendship.[4] Second, his passion for world literature set him clearly apart from other Bolshevik leaders. Third, his deep appreciation for world art became, in later life, an uncanny deftness in drawing

political caricatures. At a very early age Bukharin internalized an appreciation for the abstract qualities of life. Along with this came an externalized personal security with the formulation of his own ideas.

After completing primary education with the highest of marks, "he entered one of Moscow's best gymnasiums."[5] He excelled in their classical humanities program without, in his words, "exerting any effort."[6] Although the classics program was meant to instill an abiding faith in traditional society it did just the opposite for Bukharin. The school administration was often harsh and disciplinary. Bukharin became a member of illegal student groups in the gymnasium. By the age of sixteen, he "was already a leading member of the illegal student movement associated with social democrats."[7] The next year, 1906, he became an official member of the Bolshevik Party.

In the fall of 1907, he entered Moscow University in the economics division of the juridicial faculty. Despite his full time commitment to illegal party activity, he remained enrolled at the university until his administrative dismissal in 1910. He spent little time in the classroom.

By the time of his first arrest in May, 1909, Bukharin, at the age of twenty, was the "ranking Bolshevik leader in Russia's largest city."[8] Arrested several times after that, he finally went into hiding in the Autumn of 1910. Malinovskii, who was also a leading member of the Bolshevik Party in Moscow, revealed Bukharin's whereabouts to the Okrana.[9] He, along with others in hiding were rounded up, imprisoned and then exiled. Bukharin left Russia in 1911 and didn't return again until May 1917.

Gramsci's Childhood. Born fourth in the family of Francesco Gramsci and Peppina Marcias on January 22, 1891, Antonio Gramsci spent his youthful years on the island of Sardinia. Although Sardinia was dominated by peasant agriculture and had for years been relegated a subservient role in relation to mainland Italy, the Gramsci family lived a petty bourgeois, yet rather humble existence. Francesco possessed a "school leaving certificate," and was studying to be a lawyer when his father died. Without the financial backing to continue his studies, he took a job at the Registrar's office in Ghilarza, Sardinia. His mother's family, native to Ghilarza, was petty bourgeois and Sardinian through and through. Peppina, however, was "tall and graceful" and demonstrated an affection for good books, even though she had only three years of primary school education. She was different from other Sardinian girls. Everything from her appearance to her tastes had a European flavor, which for Francesco must have been a great relief from his uncommonly bland existence in Ghilarza. The Gramsci's were Christian, but Peppina was a somewhat more faithful churchgoer than Francesco.[10]

Although his father was imprisoned for embezzlement when Gramsci was very young, his mother stressed the importance of his education. Despite the underdevelopment of Sardinia and his need to begin work at the age of eleven to help supplement the family's income, Gramsci excelled in school at Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia. An unfortunate mishap occurred when young Nino was yet a babe. A serving-girl dropped him, causing a swelling on his back. This stunted (or at least the family makes this claim) his growth and soon his already delicate frame

became more precarious by his hunchback condition. While this prevented the young Gramsci from joining in the rougher games children play, he developed an acute interest in animals and books. He especially enjoyed building little boats. This fact of life undoubtedly contributed to Gramsci's strong constitution and will, and his insistence of the same in others in his later years. In 1911, Gramsci left for Turin, Italy to attend the University in the faculty of Letters.[11]

The Comparative Childhood. A comparative examination of each man's childhood should partially account for how each came to marxism and why they interpreted it differently. Two factors, the family and the socio-geographical context, are important in this discussion.

Bukharin and Gramsci had similar, but different families. Both families stressed the importance of education, but Nikolai's father played an active role in his education, whereas, Nino's father wasn't even present. Nino earned his education almost entirely through personal effort with little encouragement other than that provided by his mother. Nikolai's education came almost naturally, with little effort. Nino struggled while Nikolai had the luxury of contemplation. Is it any wonder, then, that Gramsci viewed marxism as a form of struggle and Bukharin viewed it as a system of thought? Gramsci rarely spoke of his father in later life, and held him responsible for the excruciating burdens he suffered as a child. Bukharin, throughout his life, regarded his father with love and admiration. Because of his father's absence, Gramsci had to work at a very young age. He felt oppression in the

workplace. Gramsci came to some form of hatred for oppression through his personal working experiences. Bukharin, on the other hand, was well provided for. Although he felt the oppression of the autocratic administration of the gymnasium, he intellectualized this oppression.

Both men became involved in revolutionary politics at a very young age. Gramsci interpreted marxism as praxis -- as a form of historical struggle for a better life. Bukharin interpreted marxism as a system of thought -- as a sociological explanation of society.

Bukharin's socialization occurred in the most industrialized city of Russia. Familiar with the culture of the working class, Bukharin felt at ease when amongst them. Gramsci's socialization occurred in the most backward, peasant villages of Sardinia. He was very much aware of the peasant culture. These opposing socio-geographical backgrounds were also reflected in the quality of the schools each boy attended. Bukharin attended the best of schools with the best of facilities and staff in Moscow. Although Gramsci attended the best school in Sardinia it was ill-equipped and poorly staffed in comparison to the schools of Moscow. In short, Bukharin had a cosmopolitan childhood; he was a Muscovite. Gramsci's childhood was filled with the cultural folkways of the Sardinian peasant; he was a Sard.

Bukharin came easily to marxist thought with his international background. It fit in rather well with his perspective from childhood. He was "first attracted to the Marxist movement less by its political stance than by the "unusual logical harmony" of Marxist social theory."[11a]

Throughout his life, Bukharin continued his appreciation for social theory, especially European sociological theory.

Gramsci struggled with marxist thought in his early years. At first Gramsci interpreted his oppression and his fellow Sardinians' oppression in relation to mainland Italy. The mainland was at fault. Independence from Italy was the answer. After in Turin for some time, his perspective broadened. He saw the Sardinian peasants' oppression and that of the Italian working class in relation to the capitalist class. Revolution against the capitalist system was the answer. When he finally adopted marxism as a world view, his interpretation had been influenced by many factors including his Sardinian background and his childhood struggle against his physical handicap. These factors continued to influence Gramsci's marxism throughout his life.

Gramsci's youthful experience on the island of Sardinia remained with him. As a leader of the Communist Party in later years, he expressed profoundly the needs of cadre to identify with the lowest of the proletariat. He grasped the importance of peasant unrest and their unequal status in relation to the urban working class. He saw the acute contradictions between urban and rural sectors of society. As a result, he never equivocated on the need for unity between proletarian and peasant. Bukharin also stressed the importance of unity between the proletariat and peasantry. However, he couldn't feel the needs of the peasantry; he could intellectualize those needs and understand their political implications, but he couldn't feel their emotions since this culture was alien to him. Gramsci's childhood, on the other hand, was

seeped in the cultural ways of the backward peasant. He not only felt their needs, but he expressed them in political as well as theoretical terms.

The Intellectual Context

The major intellectual currents predominant throughout Europe were omnipresent in Italy as well. Gramsci found this stimulation most exciting at Turin University. Three forms of thought, each but a part of the larger German philosophic tradition, came to dominate the Italian intellectual scene. They were marxism, positivism and mechanism, and idealism. The problem here is to determine to what extent these influenced Gramsci. Bukharin's reaction to a similar intellectual miliue was adherence to a positivistic and mechanistic marxism. Each man had to contend with these various forms of thought, some of which included explicit critiques of marxism. In some cases, Bukharin confronted critiques of marxism with a straightforward critique (this is especially the case with the Austrian theory of marginal utility). In other cases, Bukharin simply incorporated new social theory into marxism (this is especially the case with sociology). Gramsci's reaction, on the other hand, was altogether different. Gramsci became one of three so called "Hegelian marxists" after the failure of the Second International and the failure of revolution following World War One.[12]

The objectivism of the Second International became the marxist revolutionary project in Europe in the late 19th and 20th century. Two

opposing forms of revisionism, though born of the same mold, emerged in Europe. In France, Sorel's syndicalism with its contempt for democracy interpreted marxism as symbolic groupings and myths. In Germany, Bernstein's evolutionism withdrew from marxist revolutionary tradition and submitted to the forms of bureaucratic and parliamentary legality of the bourgeois state.

Sorel's influence upon Gramsci has not been thoroughly examined as yet. Williams suggests that Gramsci was influenced by Sorel "at first deeply and directly" but "later more subtly."[13] The first impressions are unquestionable. Gramsci's appreciation for "Sorelian historical intuition" is found openly in the pages of L'Ordine Nuovo.[14] Despite Gramsci's apparent disgust for Sorel's subordination to Croce, the Sorelian influence in later years became more general and subtle. Sorel was one of many European thinkers of the time with a healthy skepticism of scientism, positivism and mechanism. Bergson, for example, was concerned with the psychology of the unconscious. He argued that when one's conscience guides actions, then and only then can one be considered free. However, this is rare because of external forces. This Bergsonian argument easily lends itself to a social action program. A social action program demands conscious participants. Individuals, who are willing to submerge their personal will into a larger, more global will, are considered free in Bergson's analysis. Horowitz maintains that "the essential problem for both Sorel and Bergson" was "what enables men to act."[15] By the time Gramsci was earnestly reading Marx, his thinking

was colored along these lines. These Frenchmen formed a part of a more general movement against vulgar materialism. Vulgar materialism precluded a social action program since one of its fundamental tenets was that human beings were nothing more than passive contemplators of an inevitable historical process. In a time when Europeans felt on the verge of greatness (prior to W.W.I), vulgar materialism seemed all too blunt for the passion and creativity of human kind. Precisely this general European movement was to have a profound impact upon Gramsci's intellectual development.[16]

In Italy, the Second International took form in the Italian Socialist Party. Organized in 1892 by Filippe Turati, PSI reflected the objectivism of the marxist project throughout Europe. The backdrop to this organizational formation of objectivism is found in Achille Loria's eclectic marxism of the 1870's. Other budding examples of puerile marxists may be found in the pronouncements of Saverio Merlino and Carlos Ferraris.

> Their theories combined Spencerian evolutionary history, rigid economic determinism, and an abiding faith in a positivist science which would reveal the laws of history. No space was given in this tidy world for human creativity or spontaneity.[17]

Eclecticism of this sort disgusted the Italian intellectual Antonio Labriola. A man of quite persuasive means, Labriola saw "marxism as a practical philosophy," and "historical materialism as a critical method."[18] Labriola's emphasis upon practical philosophy is a recurrent theme in Gramsci's thinking, albeit expunged of its mundaneness. Labriola represents the intermediary in the transition from the puerility of Loria

to the formation of PSI, and back again to the critical idealism of Croce. As such, he is integral in the formation of Gramsci's thinking.

> By 1890, however, with the general European reaction against positivism and determinism, an anti-determinist and "Hegelian" revolutionary version of Marx appeared in Italy in competition with the older Marxism. The father of this movement was Antonio Labriola...[19]

On the whole, Labriola's contribution is two-fold. First, in attracting the young Croce to marxism, he helped clear the way for a revitalized form of revolutionary marxist project in Italy. Second, in mediating the general European movement against determinism and the specific Italian positivism of Loria, he helped create a suitable atmosphere for the formation of the PSI. As Jacobitti notes, the early formulators of PSI were "a curious mixture of Lorian positivism, Mazzinian anarchic sentimentality (often funnelled through the theories of Bukunin), and Labriola's revolutionary anti-determinism."[20]

The sociological positivism of Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, and Michels found willing expression in the works of the Italian sociologists. Italians like Sergi, Sighele, Carli, Niciforo, and Pareto, further inflamed the anti-determinist conscience of the freshly awakened Hegelian marxism of Labriola and Croce. The Italian positivists were nothing more than a specific expression of the general and traditional intellectual groupings of European positivism. The critique of this positivism, however, was never more thorough than simple ridicule and scorn. Without detailed and elaborate criticism, the anti-positivist intellectuals ill-defined their enemy. In the wreckage left behind, Croce and

Labriola had created a stirring among the young intellectuals of Italy. Although this stirring failed to defeat the positivist movement, it represented an important reawakening of the creative spirit in humankind.

> In Italy, at least as much as in Germany, the period from the 1890's to the First World War was to rank as a literary and philosophical renaissance. And this was to an extraordinary extent the work of a single man - as Benedetto Croce admitted without modesty when he came to write the history of his own time.[21]

So relates Hughes. He points out the rather loose frame of reference the anti-positivists used to define positivism: "the whole tendency to discuss human behavior in terms of analogies drawn from natural science."[22] He adds quickly that for Croce positivism was a philosophic catch all, and that we can best understand the anti-positivist critique if we view positivism "as a diffused intellectual tendency rather than as a specific set of principles."[23] Apparently, the anti-positivists used positivism interchangeably with "materialsim," "mechanism" and "naturalism." Mechanism is probably a most fitting description because of the analogies drawn fron Newtonian physics. Whereas positivism in the 18th century represented an ultra-intellectualist movement based upon rational choices for human conduct, 19th century positivism degenerated into an anti-intellectualist movement convergent with Social Darwinism.[24] While the limitations of such an ill-defined scheme of positivism are readily apparent, it is against this rather sketchy intellectual scene that a revolutionary and Hegelian form of marxism emerges in late 19th and early 20th century Italy.

> ...since it had apparently been proved impossible to arrive at any sure knowledge of human behavior - if one must rely on flashes of subjective intuition or on the creation of convenient fictions - then the mind had indeed been freed from the bonds of positivism method: it was at liberty to speculate, to imagine, to create.[25]

Labriola attracted the young Croce to his anti-determinist marxism during the 1890's. Croce was so impressed with Labriola's work he immediately immersed himself in the works of Karl Marx. Between 1895-1900 Croce delved into marxist thought and contributed some enlightening comments on the subject, but he also found marxism lacking. By 1911, he was ready to declare "socialism is dead."[26] Croce, thereafter, revered Hegel and "called himself a Hegelian."[27] Croce was but one critical thinker among many in the growing anti-positivist movement. It was this intellectual terrain which defined Croce's development.

> An early reaction against Herbert Spencer and the positivists left him with an abiding distaste for English empiricism, and Mill's utilitarian defence of liberalism he repudiated as fallacious and ignoble.[28]

An abiding faith in human creativity and an indefatigable search for the "rational in the real" defines best the Crocean character.

That Croce commanded the respect of Gramsci during his imprisonment should not alarm us. Indeed, Gramsci saw Croce "as a leader of world culture...with the object of completing the task of revision, in order that revision may become liquidation."[29]

To label another "revisionist" in the marxist sense is not altogether a complimentary remark. Despite Gramsci's 'competitive disdain' for Croce, his admiration for the man, if not his mystical idealism, certainly his immanent revitalization of marxism, is wholly

visable in the Prison Notebooks. Germino points out that "with the exception of Marx himself, no other thinker was so important to Gramsci for his own intellectual development."[30] Jacobitti notes the importance of Croce's thought upon Italian culture.

> To Gramsci, Croce had been the greatest living philosopher since Hegel and he felt that Croce's influence was so preponderant that if Italian Marxism was to survive it could only do so if its ideas were recast in Crocean terms in just the way that Marx had cast his ideas in Hegelian terms.[31]

The revitalization of Italian national culture under the tutelage of Croce contained the activist spirit so predominant in the anti-positivist movement. Revitalizing the Italian intellectual conscience was alas equally spiritual.

> The noteworthy service rendered by idealism, and especially Crocean idealism, to Marxism was to dispense with any conception of reality as something external to man's creative activity, as a kind of "mechanism functioning outside of man." Croce and the German idealists understood that thought was creative, not merely "receptive", but in emphasizing the active power of the mind in ordering reality, they ran the opposite danger of embracing an extreme subjectivism, even solipsism, in which reality becomes confused with the thought of the philosophers themselves.[32]

Gramsci's duty, of course, was to synthesize the subjectivism of Croce with the objectivism of the Italian Socialist Party. The fact that "Italian culture was moving from positivism to idealism under the intellectual leadership of Benedetto Croce" is critically important to understanding that Gramsci came to critique the positivistic and deterministic encrustations of marxist thought "through the mediation of Croce."[33]

Gramsci's interpretation of marxism rejected those elements which

made marxism a so called "social science." He viewed it as an active world force which could guide the masses in their struggle against oppression. Bukharin, on the other hand, interpreted marxism as a sociology. He viewed it as a system of thought which understood the masses' oppression. As such, Bukharin's interpretation was more contemplative than Gramsci's dynamic, active interpretation. For Gramsci, to act was to understand.

The Practical Life at Turin

The world of Turin's immense industry, especially the rapidly growing automobile industry, confronted Gramsci with something altogether different from the mundane simple life of Sardinia. The sharp contrast of the sheepherder from Sardinia with the factory machine worker from Turin was enough to propel Gramsci towards some form of critical humanitarian philosophy. Gramsci's extreme poverty and ill health became somewhat of a bond with the growing working class, which was daily arriving from the Italian countryside. The boldness of Turin's working class was something Gramsci and fellow students could not ignore.

> Moreover, the swift rise of new firms, the crashes of 1907-8, the revival of prosperity from 1911 in a context of general political militancy plunged Turin into struggles of the fiercest intensity which made its working class a by-word for solidarity and combativity.[34]

In his early years at Turin University, Gramsci studied linguistics, literature and philosophy. His socialism at this point was essentially intellectualist with commitments to the popular Sardinian and southern expression. He was "essentially 'Crocean', open to the whole world of the mind, profoundly 'ethical-political' in motive."[35]

In 1913 Gramsci was drawn into the socialist movement. "Like all the youth, he was Mussolinian in 1913-14; Sorel's style flits elusively through much of his work."[36] Although somewhat familiar with Marx, he was not a marxist. He was, though, "repelled by positivism."[37] Williams points out that "what drove Gramsci in 1914-15 was an urge 'to understand how culture developed, for revolutionary reasons...He wanted to find out how thinking can lead to action...how thought can make hands move.'"[38] Gramsci's voluntarism, at this point, was highly Crocean. It was to remain central in his more articulated marxist thought of the Prison Notebooks.

Gramsci began writing for the socialist newspaper, Il Grido del Popolo, in 1914. His first article, Active and Operative Neutrality, supported Mussolini's stand for intervention in the war and he was thereafter labelled an interventionist. This label, along with the fact that "his brother Mario volunteered for war service and ended up a fascist," crushed Gramsci emotionally.[39] He fell ill, withdrew from the University of Turin as well as active party life, and finally "collapsed into a nervous breakdown."[40]

However, Gramsci re-entered the political life in 1916 when he began publishing articles with the socialist newspaper Avanti!. Elected secretary of the Socialist section of Turin in 1917, his commitment to an active political life from this point forward never wavered. He helped found the newspaper, L'Ordine Nuovo, in 1919 with its pointed attention on the growth and development of factory councils in Italy.

During the next two years Gramsci's presence involved everything from virtual political isolation in the summer of 1920 with his communist education group to intimate contact with the Italian popular masses during the factory occupations just a few months later. The perfect expression of these two extremes emerged in January 1921 when Gramsci and Bordiga split from the PSI to form the Communist Party of Italy.

Elections in June 1921 ended Giolitti's premiership and brought 34 fascists to parliament. The growing crisis in Italy became even more critical when the Bonomi government, in office just a little over six months, fell to the rising tide of fascist inspired violence. The remaining political vacuum left labor and socialists advocating the restoration of order. Continued violence and general political-economic havoc climaxed with the fascist march on Rome on October 28, 1922.

During this interim, Gramsci became a member of the Comintern Executive as delegate of the Communist Party of Italy. Again illness forced his withdrawal to a sanitorium.[41]

In April 1924, Gramsci was elected to Parliament. He returned to Italy in May of that year.

The fascist drive for total administration of Italian society continued with Mussolini's restriction of legitimate political expression. Mussolini's stranglehold of political and civil society culminated with Gramsci's arrest on November 8, 1926. During the next two years Gramsci was shuffled from one prison to another. In June 1928 he was convicted of "six different charges of treason."[42] Although he was sentenced to serve more than twenty years, he was released from the Quisisana clinic on

April 21, 1937 and died just six days later from cerebral hemorrhage.

Gramsci's marxism developed in a very practical context as compared to Bukharin. From 1911 to 1917, Bukharin's marxism matured abroad. He spend much of his time in libraries. He had a good deal of time for contemplation during his exile. Gramsci's marxism, however, matured with an almost immediate necessity during the war and 'Bienno Rosso' (the so-called Red Years immediately following the war). Gramsci's writings about the Bolshevik Revolution reflect this dependence on daily activity.

In 1917 Gramsci wrote an article on the Bolshevik Revolution entitled "The Revolution Against Capital," in which he exclaimed, "This is the revolution against Karl Marx's Capital." He remarks further:

> The Bolsheviks reject Karl Marx, and their explicit actions and conquests bear witness that the canons of historical materialism are not so rigid as might have been and has been thought.
>
> An yet there is a fatality even in these events, and if the Bolsheviks reject some of the statements in Capital, they do not reject its invigorating, immanent thought. These people are not "Marxists", that is all; they have not used the works of the Master to compile a rigid doctrine of dogmatic utterances never to be questioned. They live Marxist thought--that thought which represents the continuation of German and Italian idealism, and which in the case of Marx was contaminated by positivist and naturalist encrustrations.[43]

The specificity of the Italian context is the post World War One crisis of Italian imperialism. During this crisis the Italian communists wrote with an open ended voluntarism. They felt the determinism of the Second International prevented the spontaneous uprisings of the working class from becoming a hegemonic force. Hence, the reference to marxism as invigorating thought is to inspire the working class of Italy.

Historically, of course, Gramsci was not all that correct in his impressions of Russia in those early months of the revolution. As Williams points out, Avanti! was misinformed on events in Russia during the revolution. It wasn't until May 1917, when Balabanoff reached Petrograd, that the Italians received any reports of the situation in Russia, and even then their impressions were sketchy to say the least.[44] Williams states further that it was an "ignorant Gramsci" responding to October 1917; that his response was entirely Crocean.[45] The immediate affect though moved Avanti! further to the left.

> Serrati's perception of Lenin at this point, like Gramsci's, was more visionary and mythical than correct, but it registered a strengthening commitment to revolution.[46]

Williams stresses that "what is striking about his (Gramsci) work at least from 1917 onwards is its very close dependence on daily practice."[47]

The fundamental difference in the maturing years of Bukharin and Gramsci is structural. From their early socialization to the years when their socialism matured, each man acted on a different stage. Bukharin was more like a director in that he observed and contemplated the world around him. Gramsci was more like the actor who struggled to create the world around him. Even in their later years this seems to be the case. Bukharin, after his dismissal from the Politburo in 1929, remained a candidate member in the Central Committee. He still held important posts after his fall from power. Gramsci, after his imprisonment, continued to struggle just to maintain his sanity. Imprisonment did, however, remove him from the day-to-day struggles of socialism.

During this time his ideas became more reflective and contemplative. Gramsci wrote his critique of Bukharin during this contemplative period.

Gramsci's Critique of Bukharin's Historical Materialism

While imprisoned at Turi, Gramsci wrote a series of critical notes on Bukharin's Historical Materialism.[48] These notes deal with material ranging from Bukharin's theoretical views to his interpretation of art. In each case, Gramsci finds fault with Bukharin's understanding of the philosophy of praxis.[49] Polemic best describes the overall thrust of the critical notes.

Gramsci equates Bukharin's marxism with several pejorative phrases, all of which are apparently interchangeable. In one place he identifies Bukharin's marxism as the "metaphysics of matter", or more simply "vulgar materialism";[50] in yet another, "mechanical materialism," "positivistic Aristotelianism", and "primitive infantilism".[51] Gramsci argues that the postulate which maintains "that every fluctuation of politics and ideology can be presented and expounded as an immediate expression of the structure" equals "primitive infantilism."[52] According to Gramsci this theoretical position has a three-fold problematic. First, one can identify tendencies within a dynamic structure but not laws.

> Politics in fact is at any given time the reflection of the tendencies of development in the structure, but it is not necessarily the case that these tendencies must be realized. A structural phase can be concretely studied and analyzed only after it has gone through its whole process of development, and not during the process itself, except hypothetically and, with the explicit provisio that one is dealing with hypotheses.[53]

Second, mechanical materialism "does not allow for the possibility of

error" by the leaders.[54] It apparently assumes a unidimensional link between structure and rational action. This theory dismisses the possibility of human foibles. Third, political acts may be due more to the internal necessities of an organizational structure than they are to changes in the economic structure. On the whole, Gramsci's critique fits well with the historic marxist critique. He weds an unflinching polemic with the critical extension of Bukharin's logic. The result is oftentimes a lucid sardonic tone.

> Reading the Manual one has the impression of someone who cannot sleep for the moonlight and who struggles to massacre the fireflies in the belief that by so doing he will make the brightness lessen or disappear.[55]

Gramsci's wit is subtle interplay between polemic and logic.

The question arises as to why Gramsci devoted time to this expression of "primitive infantilism." Gramsci condemns Bukharin's selection of minor adversaries for criticism.[56] He maintains that only the great intellectuals of a particular philosophical tendency should be chosen for critical analysis. Only in this way can one conduct 'serious' and 'scientific' elucidation of past philosophies.

> This is connected precisely to a more general criterion of method which is this: it is not very "scientific", or more simply it is not very "serious", to choose to combat the stupidest and most mediocre of one's opponents or even to choose to combat the least essential and the most occasional of their opinions and then to presume thereby to have "destroyed" "all" the enemy because one has destroyed a secondary and incidental opinion of his or to have destroyed an ideology or a doctrine because one has demonstrated the theoretical inadequacy of its third-or fourth-rate champions. Further: "one must be fair to one's enemies", in the sense that one must make an effort to understand what they really meant to

> say and not maliciously stop short at the superficial immediate meaning of their expressions. That is to say, if the end proposed is that of raising the tone and intellectual level of one's followers and not just the immediate aim of creating a desert around oneself by all means possible.[57]

If we direct this argument at Gramsci, it means that Gramsci must see Bukharin as a great intellectual of a philosophical tendency. Gramsci finds Bukharin "most representative" within the "vulgar materialist" tendency. Why does Gramsci write his critique eight years after the publication of Historical Materialism? Two reasons are apparent. First, Bukharin made his views on historical materialism international with his presentation to the London Congress of the History of Science in June-July 1931.[58] Gramsci feared the international influence of Bukharin's views. Second, Gramsci sought to define his views, for purposes of the movement in Italy, in contradistinction to this vulgar tendency within marxism. This tendency was, in essence, a relic from the Second International. But it was contemporary and could therefore have an immediate impact. Furthermore, Bukharin represented the USSR in official status at the London Congress. When supported by a nation state, philosophical views exert a far greater impact upon world opinion than when espoused by individuals or disparate groups. Gramsci continues this methodological point.

> These are the opinions that must be refuted, in the person of those of their theoretical exponents who are most representative and indeed worthy of respect for the high quality of their thought and for their "disinteredness" in the immediate term. Nor should this be done with the idea that one has thereby destroyed the corresponding social element and social force (which would be pure enlightenment rationalism) but only with the idea of having contributed 1. to maintaining and

> strengthening among one's own side the spirit of distinction and division; and 2. to preparing the ground to one's own side to absorb and give life to an original doctrine of its own, corresponding to its own conditions of life.[59]

Gramsci obviously recognizes Bukharin as "most representative" of a particular "social force." Gramsci's very subtle point, however, is to divorce himself from that "social force." Aware of Bukharin's fall from power, Gramsci struggled further to disassociate philosophy of praxis from exactly that social force behind Bukharin's fall.[60] Although no longer politically in power, Bukharin's philosophical views still dominated the outlook of the Communist Party of the Soviety Union.[61] In this subtle sense then, Gramsci locates in Bukharin a common disgust with the social force, but identifies the major divisions between his and Bukharin's interpretation of the philosophy of praxis.

On the whole, Gramsci viewed Bukharin as a leader of a particular philosophical tendency called vulgar materialism. His desire was to disassociate himself from that tendency with the result of implicitly denying the legality of the social force behind Bukharin's fall, and of preparing the framework for a social force essentially different in outlook from the USSR.[62]

Two themes are central in his critique. They emerge not so much in explicit form as they do in implicit substance. The first deals with historiography which involves theoretical and epistomological questions. The second deals with Weltanschauugen (world outlooks) which involves the interplay between common sense, ideology, philosophy and human action. Gramsci refers to the former as "the source of all the errors of the Manual, and of its author" and to the latter as his "first mistake."[63]

I will examine "the source of all the errors" first.

> The absence of any treatment of the dialectic could have two origins. The first of these would be the fact that philosophy of praxis is envisaged as split into two elements: on the one hand a theory of history and politics conceived as sociology - i.e. one that can be constructed according to the methods of natural science (experimental in the crudest positivist sense); and on the other hand a philosophy proper, this being philosophical alias metaphysical or mechanical (vulgar) materialism.[64]

Gramsci maintains that Bukharin turns the dialectic into "the level of a sub-species of formal logic and elementary scholastics."[65] Bukharin subordinates philosophy of praxis to traditional materialist categories. He does not see the transcendent nature of philosophy of praxis and thus falls prey to old cultural forms.[66]

> The true fundamental function and significance of the dialectic can only be grasped if the philosophy of praxis is conceived as an integral and original philosophy which opens up a new phase of history and a new phase in the development of world thought. It does this to the extent that it goes beyond both traditional idealism and traditional materialism, philosophies which are expressions of past societies, while retaining their vital elements.[67]

Gramsci argues the dialectic is a "doctrine of knowledge and the very marrow of historiography and the science of politics..."[68] No other statement by Gramsci concretizes so well the convergence of theory and method in praxis. According to Gramsci, the philosophy of praxis conquers the "history of modern thought" because it represents the "concrete historicisation of philosophy and its identification with history."[69] It cannot "coincide with any past system...(because)... identity of terms does not mean identity of concepts".[70] For Gramsci, the division of "the philosophy of praxis into two parts: a 'sociology'

philosophy is the "source of all the errors of the Manual" and its author.[71]

The subsidiary questions involved in Gramsci's historicism are theoretical and epistomological. With each question Gramsci asserts the autonomy and uniqueness of philosophy of praxis in relation to previous philosophy.

Bukharin does not conceive theory in radically differentiated fashion from past theory. He used theory as historically defined in the bourgeois epoch, with the added twist of marxist language. He is therefore unable to grasp the novelty of marxist categories. Because Bukharin fails to justify "that the true philosophy is philosophical materialism and that the philosophy of praxis is purely a 'sociology'," he is unable to pose the question of theory with any exactitude.[72] As a result, there is "no clear and precise concept of what philosophy of praxis itself actually is."[73]

Bukharin wishes to systematize marxism without resolving the attendent theoretical and empirical questions involved in revolutionary science. Gramsci writes:

> A new science proves its efficacy and vitality when it demonstrates that it is capable of confronting the great champions of the tendencies opposed to it and when it either resolves by its own means the vital questions which they have posed or demonstrates,in peremptory fashion, that these questions are false problems.[74]

Bukharin mistakes science for system. He therefore overlooks the necessity of elaborating the basic concepts of philosophy of praxis. Gramsci maintains that marxism remains "at the stage of discussion, polemic and elaboration."[75]

> Why not therefore pose the question in its correct theoretical and historical terms and rest content with a book in which each of the essential problems of the doctrine receives separate monographic treatment? This would be more serious and more 'scientific'. But the vulgar contention is that science must absolutely mean a 'system', and consequently systems of all sorts are built up which have only the mechanical exteriority of a system and not its necessary inherent coherence.[76]

Bukharin's acritical acceptance of traditional philosophical categories indicates his misunderstanding of the immanent structure of Marx's terminology. Concerning the dialectic Gramsci notes:

> It is well known, moreover, that the originator of the philosophy of praxis (Marx) never called his own conception materialist and that when writing about French materialism he criticizes it and affirms that the critique ought to be more exhaustive. Thus he never uses the formula "materialist dialectic", but calls it "rational" as opposed to "mystical" which gives the term 'rational' a quite precise meaning.[77]

Bukharin's theoretical orientation is best defined by early twentieth century sociological theory on one hand, and an acritical acceptance of historical philosophical categories on the other hand.[78] The former merely expresses Bukharin's manifest positivism, while the latter indicates his latent universalism.

Bukharin's failure in this respect does not allow him to pose correctly the most primary question raised by the philosophy of praxis. That is, "how does the historical movement arise on the structural base."[79] As Gramsci notes, without resolving this question one cannot proceed with the many attendent questions.

> This is furthermore the crux of all the questions that have arisen around the philosophy of praxis and without resolving this one cannot resolve the corresponding problem about the relationship between society and "nature", to which the Manual devotes a special chapter.[80]

Since Bukharin neglects to cover this essential question, the remainder of his views contain a faulty base. An architect cannot build a house without first laying a sound foundation. Bukharin, in this case, raises a superstructure upon thin air. As Gramsci puts it, the Popular Manual is "idealism upside down."[81]

Human activity is central in Gramsci's historicism. In Gramsci's epistomology, the human is the active agent in the scientific process, while for Bukharin the human is the passive receptor of the world. This is a foolish argument since no science would admit human inactivity in the scientific process. What then confines the scientist in Bukharin's epistomological orientation? Gramsci argues an externally imposed method traps the scientist; as a result the scientist is passive.

> To think that one can advance the progress of a work of scientific research by applying to it a standard method, chosen because it has given good results in another field of research to which it was naturally suited, is a strange delusion which has little to do with science.[82]

Bukharin's systemization of marxism resembles science in form, but this form is external and thus false and illusory.

> The philosophy implicit in the Popular Manual could be called a positivistic Aristotelianism, an adaptation of formal logic to the methods of physical and natural science. The historical dialectic is replaced by the law of causality and the search for regularity, normality and uniformity.[83]

Gramsci does not deny the importance of uniformity, rather the external imposition of the positivist method upon that uniformity.

> Naturally this does not mean that the search for 'laws' or uniformity is not a useful and interesting pursuit or that a treatise of immediate observations on the art of politics does not have its purpose.[84]

As Gramsci observes, this external methodological imposition doesn't admit two falacies of statistical laws. First, statistical laws can be employed only so long as the masses of the population are inactive.

> It should be observed that political action tends precisely to rouse the masses from passivity, in other words to destroy the law of large numbers. So how can that law be considered a sociology?[85]

Second, statistical laws may result in improper political programs.

> Furthermore the extension of statistics to the science and art of politics can have very serious consequences to the extent that it is adopted for working out future perspectives and programmes of action. In the natural sciences the worst that statistics can do is produce blunders and irrelevances which can easily be corrected by further research and which in any case simply make the individual scientist who used the technique look a bit ridiculous. But in the science and art of politics it can have literally catastrophic results which do irreparable harm.[86]

While Gramsci has little objection to the compilation of empirical observations, he opposes making these observations a methodological orientation.

> The so-called laws of sociology which are assumed as laws of causation (such-and-such a fact occurs because of such-and-such a law, etc.) have no causal value: they are almost always tautologies and paralogisms. Usually they are no more than a duplicate of the observed fact itself.[87]

Gramsci asserts the centrality of human activity in the scientific process. His whole argument rests upon the organic, historic human. Objectivity is not something imposed by particular methodological criteria, but something internal.

> The idea of 'objective' in metaphysical materialism would appear to mean an objectivity that exists even apart from man; but when one affirms that a reality would exist even if man did not, one is either speaking metaphorically or one is falling into a form of mysticism. We know reality only in relation to man, and since man is historical becoming, knowledge and reality are also becoming and so is objectivity, etc.[88]

The scientist is an active agent in experimentation. Experimentation becomes a new expression of humanity; it is a new bond. This bond is the "cell of the new method of production."[89] Hence, experimentation is the embryonic formation of a new society.

> Scientific experiment is the first cell of the new method of production, of the new form of active union of man and nature. The scientist-experimentor is also a worker, not a pure thinker, and his thought is continually controlled by practice and vice versa, until there is formed the perfect unity of theory and practice.[90]

Since only tendencies and not laws can be detected, prediction becomes an act of the scientist rather than passive pretense.

> Prediction reveals itself thus not as a scientific act of knowledge, but as the abstract expression of the effort made, the practical way of creating a collective will.
>
> And how could prediction be an act of knowledge? One knows what has been and what is, not what will be, which is something 'non-existent' and therefore unknowable by definition.[91]

Gramsci destroys both the subjectivist and the objectivist positions on the nature of knowledge and being. Again, he maintains that the human is the internal mediator within time and space.

> Objectivity always means "humanly objective" which can be held to correspond exactly to 'historically subjective': in other words, objective would mean universal subjective. Man knows objectively in so far as knowledge is real for the whole human race historically unified in a single unitary cultural system.[92]

In maintaining that the source of all the errors of the Manual is the division of the philosophy of praxis into two--one a sociology, the other metaphysical materialism--Gramsci makes two points. First, Bukharin's systematic marxism becomes trapped by a positivist methodology

adopted mistakenly from the natural sciences. This leads ultimately to a position which views the human being as external to historic process. The intellectual origin for Bukharin's mistaken identification of marxism with sociology is early twentieth century sociology. Second, Bukharin confines his marxism within traditional philosophic categories. Caught in historically defined language, Bukharin's marxism lapses ultimately into a form of metaphysical materialism.[93]

Gramsci examines Bukharin's understanding of the concepts quantity and quality to highlight his first point. Both Bukharin and Gramsci agree in the abstract that society is more than the sum of its parts. However, they disagree in the concrete. Bukharin uses the mechanical analogy of the thermometer. Water at a certain temperature exists quantitatively and qualitatively. As the temperature rises, the nature of water changes until at a certain point, say 100°C, it changes form completely. Bukharin has made a point. However, Gramsci points out that it is "a mechanical fact determined by external agents...[94] Gramsci locates the passage from quantity to quality in human action -- historically becoming.

> In the case of man, who is this external agent? In the factory it is the division of labor, etc., conditions created by a man himself. In society it is the ensemble of productive forces. But the author of the Manual has not considered that, if every social aggregate is something more (and different) than the sum of its components, this must mean that the law or principle which explains the development of society cannot be a physical law, since in physics one does not get out of the quantitative sphere except metaphorically.[95]

Bukharin's methodological orientation precludes the human actor from center stage.

To highlight his second point Gramsci examines Bukharin's understanding of matter. Bukharin understands matter in the natural scientific sense, and not as a productive economic element. Using the term in this way differs little from its use in metaphysical materialism. Thus, Bukharin fails to grasp the significance of Marx's critique of old materialism. Gramsci notes the marxian understanding of matter.

> Matter as such therefore is not our subject but how it is socially and historically organized for production, and natural science should be seen correspondingly as essentially an historical category, a human relation.[96]

Matter is not simply objective. It is infused with the subjective action of the human being. It thus becomes a dialectical relation and a humanly dependent process.

In Chapter V, I examine Gramsci's critique of Bukharin's Weltanschaaug. Much of Gramsci's marxism remains implicit in his critique. Our objective is to make it explicit. Special attention will be given to the link between positivism and the party/bureaucracy contradiction, and the accompanying question of the Leninist party. Perhaps it would be best to conclude Chapter IV and begin Chapter V with a quote from Gramsci which links the historicist and leadership questions of the philosophy of praxis.

> To maintain that the philosophy of praxis is not a completely autonomous and independent structure of thought in antagonism to all traditional philosophies and religions, means in reality that one has not severed one's links with the old world, if indeed one has not actually capitulated.[97]

CHAPTER V

BUKHARIN'S POSITIVISM AND THE PARTY/BUREAUCRACY CONTRADICTION: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRAXIS

Introduction

Five loose ends remain from Chapter IV. The first concerns Gramsci's disassociation from the Soviet Union. I will discuss this point under the general critique of the Leninist party, of which it seems a part. The other four include Bukharin's Weltanschauung, the psychological dimension of Bukharin's major error, his revisionism, and the quality of his leadership. While I begin with the latter two, all four are part of the link between Bukharin's positivism and the party/bureaucracy contradiction.

For purposes of continuity I will restate the party/bureaucracy contradiction. The conflict between private ownership of small industry and agriculture on one hand, and of state ownership of capital industry on the other hand determined the structure of NEP. Social relations between the peasantry and the proletariat were held together precariously by the party's capacity to effectively unite the two with mutually beneficial commodity exchange. Equilibrium continually gave way to various price fluctuations and grain shortages. The superstructural manifestation of this contradiction emerged in the form of hegemonic crisis. This crisis was submerged to the extent that it occurred sporadically during NEP and finally exploded in 1929 with Stalin's

"revolution from above." The hegemonic crisis consisted precisely in the fact that the relations between the base of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the party itself had lost their organic character. NEP became therefore the party's attempt to reestablish its organic link with the proletarian/peasantry alliance (smychka). Instead of becoming more organic the party more and more began to resemble a machine. As its quality declined, its quantity increased. The mechanical appendage to this growth was the bureaucracy. It was this bureaucracy which corralled the ensuing struggles between left and right in the party. Indeed, the left and right appealed to this bureaucracy for judgment of their respective programs. Judgment came, but it was a mechanically imposed justice. Neither right nor left won in the nightmarish climax to NEP. Stalin indeed had resolved the contradiction.

Thus far we have examined Gramsci's critique of Bukharin's marxism in the abstract. Many other writers have done this, although not as thoroughly. Their mistake is to leave it at that. My contribution will be to extend this critique to Bukharin's praxis; hence, the whole question of the relationship between Bukharin's positivism and the party/bureaucracy contradiction. What are the concrete manifestations of Bukharin's positivism? No other author has addressed this question. Up to this point I have explicated Gramsci's critique. From this point forward Gramsci's critique will be used to support my argument. This is the sense in which I speak of Gramsci's immanent critique. My point is this: Bukharin's positivism was manifested concretely in the party as a mechanical net which both constrained the organic growth of the party

and widened the parameters for its quantitative growth. This net was the bureaucracy. Thus, Bukharin's positivism in the abstract became the party/bureaucracy contradiction in the concrete.

Two forms of leadership require attention in our discussion. First, there is the leadership within the party, or simply intraparty leadership. As a party grows this form becomes more important. Two sociohistorical factors contribute to continued organic growth of the party. On the one hand, new members must be introduced with the same or similar dynamic commitment to the party ideology as were the old guard. On the other hand, local party cadre must maintain a cohesive bond with both the local mass of which it is a representative and the top echelons of the party of which it aspires to be. Both became critical in time and space since the growth of the party indicates the development of necessary party functions. More simply, as party functions increase so do the number of party individuals who have well defined roles. These well defined roles of course refer to bureaucracy. Hence, it is very important that the bureaucracy is not a mechanical addition but an organic part of the party as a whole.

Second, there is the leadership between the party and the mass, or simply interparty leadership. As the mass becomes more consciously active, this form becomes more important. While the mass conditions the party to the extent that the party articulates the oftentimes incoherent expressions of the movement, the party must elevate these spontaneous stirrings of the mass to their historical cultural awareness. Two social psychological factors contribute to the dialectical relation between

mass and party. On the one hand, party leaders must not manipulate the spontaneity of the mass for immediate party gain. Oftentimes this is referred to as opportunism. The concrete manifestation of this error is party reluctance to carry through with its cultural project, i.e., to raise the consciousness of the mass to its sociohistorical capacity. This mistake relies upon the gut level reaction of the mass and in no way makes an effort to go beyond this spontaneous emotion. Indeed, it plays up to it. On the other hand, party leaders must not impose their coherent world view upon the mass without first understanding the masses' spontaneous emotion. This emotion must first be made coherent. Only then is an alternative world view a possibility. That is if we wish the new world view to be a really organic part of an individual's social psychological makeup. Anyone can have an artifically or mechanically imposed world view. As interparty leadership develops, the distinctions between party and mass become less apparent.

The duality of leadership expressed here has concrete substance in the life of the mass itself. These forms are but mere expressions of one whole. This whole is the new ruling group or hegemonic force. In my opinion, this is the meaning of the following statement by Gramsci.

> Thus, since every party is only a class nomenclature, it is evident that for the party which sets itself to abolish the division into classes, its perfection and completion consists in no longer existing, since classes, and therefore their expressions, no longer exist.[1]

Concerning the quality of Bukharin's leadership, I would like to make two points. Since both points apply to inter and intraparty leadership, I will not distinguish between the two. First, Bukharin is

a revisionist rather than an orthodox marxist.[2] Second, he is a traditional rather than an organic intellectual.[3]

Bukharin's revisionism consists precisely in the fact that he subordinates philosophy of praxis to "general (vulgar) materialist philosophy."[4] His leadership and praxis are thus confined by traditional philosophical categories. Hence, his marxism represents a continuous, uninterrupted flow of intellectual thought from the old to the new, despite the apparent ideological disruptions with previous thought. This accounts for the similarity between his "revolutionary" equilibrium theory and the bourgeois "norm of reciprocity." As Gramsci points out, orthodoxy refers to one's orientation within the philosophy of praxis.

> Orthodoxy is not to be looked for in this or that adherent of the philosophy of praxis, or in this or that tendency connected with currents extraneous to the original doctrine, but in the fundamental concept that the philosophy of praxis is "sufficient unto itself", that it contains in itself all the fundamental elements needed to construct a total and integral conception of the world, a total philosophy and theory of natural science, and not only that but everything that is needed to give life to an integral practical organization of society, that is, to become a total integral civilization.[5]

Notice that Gramsci does not state philosophy of praxis is such and such -- he does not say that it is a science -- but rather that "it contains in itself all the fundamental elements needed to construct... to become a total integral civilization." Bukharin in a sense develops these "fundamental elements" but he subordinates them to past philosophy. He confines them to a falsely adopted methodological orientation. Thus, Bukharin is not an orthodox marxist. Bukharin has not severed "links with the old world." He maintains continuity with the past, and therefore he is a traditional intellectual.

A closer inquiry into the quality of Bukharin's leadership reveals the link between positivism and praxis. His ideological leadership within the party is unquestioned. He exercised his intra and interparty leadership in several ways. He was well published in various party journals and official newspapers. After 1926, he was President of Comintern. As the recognized party theoretician he published several very important works; ABC's of Communism and Historical Materialism to name but two. As a leader of the party which claimed its base in the smychka, he had very organic ties with the proletariat, but lacked the same with the peasantry. The latter two forms of leadership, i.e., as theoretician and leader of smychka, concern us most. Inquiry into these forms of leadership will reveal the link between positivism and praxis.

Bukharin wrote Historical Materialism for circulation within the party. As such, the intended audience included cadre who had accumulated critical experience during the maturation of the revolution as well as cadre who had been recently introduced into the party. The practical impact of such a document is therefore two-fold: (1) it must embrace a wide range of experience and critical knowledge; and (2) it must consider the various levels of party membership, i.e., everything from local cadre to the top echelons of the party. Both have interparty implications since at every level of experience and membership, party cadre deal with the mass. In a word, Bukharin had a profound impact upon the development of intra and interparty leadership with the publication of Historical Materialism. I will demonstrate, with the use

of Gramsci's critique, that this impact tended towards an acritical and mechanical acceptance of the objective world; a world well defined within bureaucracy; a world defined by the party/bureaucracy contradiction. Bukharin therefore contributed actively to the contradiction which spelled his doom.

Gramsci's Immanent Critique

The second theme of Gramsci's critique deals with world outlook, which broken down involves common sense, ideology and philosophy, and human action. The concrete manifestation of Bukharin's world outlook, which as we pointed out above was subordinate to traditional materialist philosophy and sociological positivism, results in an acritical acceptance of the objective world. Bukharin does this in a contradictory way. On one hand, he doesn't bother to critique common sense, and on the other hand, he appeals to common sense. He ignores it, then lauds it -- all in a vain attempt to embellish philosophy of praxis.

Bukharin begins by opposing historical materialism to other great philosophies, rather than with a critique of common sense. Gramsci maintains that a popular work ought to begin with a critique of common sense, since this is the average person's conception of the world.

> A work like the Popular Manual, which is essentially destined for a community of readers who are not professional intellectuals, should have taken as its starting point a critical analysis of the philosophy of common sense, which is the "philosophy of non-philosophers," or in other words the conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average man is developed.[6]

Bukharin's first mistake is methodological. A critique of great philosophical systems is certainly necessary, but only after the "chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions" of common sense is criticized.[7]

> The first mistake of the Popular Manual is that it starts, at least implicitly, from the assumption that the elaboration of an original philosophy of the popular masses is to be opposed to the great systems of traditional philosophy and the religion of the leaders of the clergy--i.e., the conception of the world of the intellectuals and high culture. In reality these systems are unknown to the multitude and have no direct influence on its way of thinking and acting.[8]

Gramsci suggests the correct procedure for a popular work: (1) a critique of common sense; (2) a polemic against traditional philosophy and religion; and (3) an elaboration of the philosophy of praxis. Why bother with common sense, since it does contain some truth?

> What was said above does not mean that there are no truths in common sense. It means rather that common sense is an ambiguous, contradictory and multiform concept, and that to refer to common sense as a confirmation of truth is a nonsense. It is possible to state correctly that a certain truth has become common sense in order to indicate that it has spread beyond the confines of intellectual groups, but all one is doing in that case is making a historical observation and an assertion of the rationality of history.[9]

Common sense has a formal solidity, a "consequent imperative character (which) they have when they produce norms of behavior."[10] Common sense guides human action, ideology rationalizes it, and philosophy is the intellectual endeavor of certain leaders within the ruling class. The role of the intellectual within the newly emergent hegemonic force is active confrontation with previous modes of conduct, i.e., common sense, rather than passive reflection of past philosophy.

> In the teaching of philosophy which is aimed not at giving the student historical information about the development of past philosophy, but at giving him a cultural formation and helping him to elaborate his own thought critically so as to be able to participate in an ideological and cultural community, it is necessary to take as one's starting point what the student already knows and his philosophical experience (having first demonstrated to him precisely that he has such an experience, that he is a "philosopher" without knowing it). And since one presupposes a certain average culture and intellectual level among the students, who in all probability have hitherto only acquired scattered and fragmentary bits of information and have no methodological and critical preparation, one cannot but start in the first place from common sense, then secondly from religion, and only at a third stage move on to the philosophical systems elaborated by traditional intellectual groups.[11]

Philosophy of praxis conceived in this manner is not an abstract entity. It is an on-going struggle to overcome common sense; it is an embryo of the new society. Gramsci asks:

> Is it possible to write an elementary book, a handbook a "Popular Manual" on a doctrine that is still at the stage of discussion, polemic and elaboration? A popular manual cannot be conceived other than as a formally dogmatic, stylistically poised and scientifically balanced exposition of a particular subject.[12]

Since the philosophy of praxis is a mass philosophy, it must always be conceived in polemical form. It is not a system or science precisely to the extent that it is still in the process of elaboration on the one hand, and that it is an embryonic formation of the new society on the other hand. In other words, it is necessarily incomplete as a system of thought and society. Gramsci fears the Popular Manual because it both ignores and reinforces common sense.

> This, then, is a danger of the Popular Manual, which often reinforces, instead of scientifically criticizing, these acritical elements which have caused common sense to remain Ptolemaic, anthropomorphic, and anthropocentric.[13]

This methodological error would appear to be a sociohistorical aspect of

intraparty leadership. However, the distinctions between intra and interparty leadership are not so apparent since the party at this point is in the process of rapid growth and decline.

There is the social psychological aspect of interparty leadership. According to Gramsci, the second origin for "the absence of any treatment of the dialectic...would appear to be psychological."[14]

> It is felt that the dialectic is something arduous and difficult, in so far as thinking dialectically goes against vulgar common sense.[15]

Bukharin is unable to deal properly with the dialectic because he opposes it to something already considered foolish by the mass. Gramsci offers the following example: if you introduced Einsteinian relativity to school children who are still being taught the "law of nature" at home, they would laugh. Similarly, the dialectic lacks all meaning to the average person who bases his/her action upon what is known, most common, i.e., common sense.

> The popular public does not think that a problem such as whether the external world exists objectively can even be asked. One just has to enunciate the problem in these terms to provoke an irresistable and gargantuan outburst of laughter.[16]

This question of course is legitimate philosophical inquiry but only after some critical sense is made of common sense. To pose the question outright is indeed laughable. Gramsci maintains that to both ignore and reinforce common sense is reactionary.

> Since all religions have taught and do teach that the world, nature, the universe were created by God before the creation of man, and therefore man found the world already made, catalogued and defined once and for all, this belief has become an iron fact of "common sense" and survives with the same solidity even if

> religious feeling is dead or asleep. It follows therefore that to base oneself on this experience of common sense in order to destroy the subjectivist conception by "poking fun" at it has a rather "reactionary" significance, an implicit return to religious feeling.[17]

Bukharin implicitly adopts a common sensical view. Yet he explicitly ignores a critique of common sense. Again this would seem to lock philosophy of praxis into a past orientation of reality. He attempts to make philosophy of praxis common sense. A critical view of the subjectivist conception is thus made impossible from the view of philosophy of praxis.

> The point that must be made against the Popular Manual is that is has presented the subjectivist conception just as it appears from the point of view of common sense criticism and that it had adopted the conception of the objective reality of the external world in its most trivial and uncritical sense without so much as a suspicion that it can run into objections on the grounds of mysticism, as indeed it has.[18]

Overall, Bukharin makes theoretical and methodological mistakes which result in an equally mistaken praxis.

> This motivation seems to me to act as a psychological brake on the author of the Manual; he really does capitulate before common sense and vulgar thought, since he has not put the problem in exact theoretical terms and is therefore in practice disarmed and impotent.[19]

His theoretical error locks philosophy of praxis into traditional and past philosophy. His methodological error results in an acritical acceptance of the objective world.

The linkages established here between Bukharin's positivism and the party/bureaucracy contradiction seem apparent in the abstract. Indeed positivism and the contradiction are abstractions. They must be examined in their concrete form if the link is to have any practical-theoretical value.

Bukharin's Positivism and the Party/Bureaucracy Contradiction

The Bolshevik Revolution had a reactionary impact upon the agricultural structure of Russia. It actually undid some of the more important reforms instituted under Stolypin. In addition, the cultural differences between the proletariat and the peasantry made the smychka a tenuous alliance. What was to be done in this context? Lenin advocated two general programs which became the defining character of NEP. First, peasant agricultural production must become a rural cooperative effort organized around socialist principles. Second, the old peasant world view must be replaced with a conscious revolutionary socialist world view. These two programs must be completed in unison. After Lenin's death, the primary responsibility to complete these tasks was left to the united leadership of the party. Since Bukharin was the focal point of ideological leadership in the party, the task fell heavy upon his shoulders.

Although Bukharin's praxis during NEP favored the peasantry, the implementation of his programs was mechanical. The party could not educate the peasantry on the basis of Bukharin's work. There are four concrete political reasons for this failure. First, positivism becomes a dead testament in praxis. In other words, positivism was like preaching to the peasantry. Party cadre were ineffective in explaining the reasons for the needs of rural cooperatives, because the peasants couldn't understand the world view from which these reasons evolved; they remained within their pre-revolutionary world view. The confrontation between these world views exploded with Stalin's revolution from

above. Stalin invoked the political, rather than the cultural solution. Second, positivism in the practical world tends to establish a caste-like hierarchy defined primarily by those who know and those who don't know, or more simply rulers and ruled. Certain privileges accompany this caste-like formation. A party cadre could feel superior, in the sense that he or she is the one who knows. Positivism inadvertantly manifests a new elite who in times of revolutionary change provide continuity with the past. These elites lack the organic character of the original party members. Thus, they are easily moved and shifted within the bureaucracy. It therefore becomes easy for an individual to situate himself comfortably within the boundaries of the mechanical bureaucracy. Stalin, as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, manipulated individuals within the bureaucracy to further confine his rivals. Third, positivism turns marxism into a plan for the development of socialism. Socialism, however, is not a plan but rather a working out, a process of struggle with old forms of behavior. For example, socialism is not the plan to establish cooperative farming, but the actual struggle involved in establishing cooperative farming. Bukharin's positivism in Historical Materialism imposes a doctrine upon the life of society where that life is yet to be created. A doctrine develops as the result of creating life and not vice-versa. Finally, rival programs within the ruling party could not challenge the party with a popular presentation to the smychka. Trotsky in 1923 and 1926, and Bukharin in 1928-29 challenged Stalin's programs within the confines of the party/bureaucracy. They feared the mass to the extent that exposure could

destroy the party's authority. They couldn't appeal to the smychka because they wouldn't have understood the high level argumentation. They failed to see the educational value of presenting their discussions to the mass. By the time the party had decided upon a major collectivization effort, Bukharin was too thoroughly entrenched in the party/bureaucracy to make an appeal to the smychka.

On the whole, positivism demands an elite organization which assumes the mass too ignorant to understand high level philosophy. As a result, they simplify it; they make it common sense without having first destroyed the common sense of the old world view. In the end, the mass laughs, and the party seeks revenge.

Gramsci sums it up best.

> The popular element "feels" but does not always know or understand; the intellectual element "knows" but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel. The two extremes are therefore pedantry and philistinism on the one hand and blind passion and sectarianism on the other. Not that the pedant cannot be impassioned, far from it. Impassioned pedantry is every bit as ridiculous and dangerous as the wildest sectarianism and demagogy. The intellectual's error consists in believing that one can know without understanding and even more without feeling and being impassioned (not only for knowledge in itself but also for the object of knowledge): in other words that the intellectual can be an intellectual (and not a pure pedant) if distinct and separate from the people-nation, that is, without feeling the elementary passions of the people, understanding them and therefore explaining and justifying them in a particular historical situation and connecting them dialectically to the laws of history and to a superior conception of the world, scientifically and coherently elaborated - i.e., knowledge. One cannot make politics-history without this passion, without this sentimental connection between intellectuals and people-nation. In the absence of such a nexus the relations between the intellectual and the people-nation are or are reduced to, relationships of a purely bureaucratic and formal order; the intellectuals become a caste, or a priesthood (so-called organic centralism).[20]

Those who know but cannot feel the elementary emotions of the mass are external to the process of cultural education. They are external mediators rather than internal mediators. This is the point at which Gramsci's disassociation from the "social force" ruling the Soviet Union becomes concrete.

What did Gramsci think of Leninism? By 1926, Gramsci had acquired an acute knowledge of Lenin's work. Overall, he viewed Leninism as (1) relations between the party and the mass, and (2) the work of persuasion rather than expulsion.[21] He heartily welcomed the Bolshevik Revolution as the "triumphant seizure of power by the Bolsheviks."[22] He felt the PSI should use this as a lesson for the Italian working class. As we have seen in the above discussion, however, his jubilation was short lived. Although he disagreed generally with Trotsky, by 1923 he shared Trotsky's "disapproval over the trends in the Russian party."[23] These trends of course were away from the politics of persuasion towards the politics of expulsion.

In 1926 the hegemonic crisis in the Soviet Union surfaced with the expulsion of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev from the Central Committee of the Party. In October of 1926, Gramsci sent a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union urging unity, but not "mechanical and forced" unity. He concludes the letter:

> Comrades Zinoviev, Trotsky, and Kamenev have made a powerful contribution to our revolutionary education; they have sometimes corrected us vigorously and sternly; they have been our teachers. It is especially to them that we turn now, as to those most responsible for the present situation, because we want to be sure that the majority of the Central Committee of the U.S.S.R., (sic) if it wins, does not intend to press its victory too far, and is willing not to employ excessive measures.[24]

As leader of the Communist Party of Italy, Gramsci's letter was official communication between two parties. Togliatti, now the official Italian delegate to the Comintern, received Gramsci's letter and replied immediately. He informed Gramsci that he misunderstood the situation and should not interfere. Gramsci's second letter, an even more vehement denunciation of the party's action, was consigned to the wastebasket by Togliatti.[25] Shortly thereafter, Mussolini's fascists arrested Gramsci. As Davidson points out, 1926 marks Gramsci's "spiritual disassociation with Stalinism and therefore from the new trends of international communism."[26]

In 1929, Gramsci was enraged further with the International's attack upon social democracy. The Comintern discarded united front tactics for a bankrupt policy which claimed the main threat was social democracy.[27] We do not know if Gramsci was aware of Bukharin's fall, but we speculate that when his borther Mario visited him in 1929 he informed him of all the major events in the Soviet Union. In any event, Gramsci's disassociation from the Soviet Union was complete and firm by the time he wrote his critique of Bukharin's Popular Manual.

Although Gramsci remained true to the spirit of Leninism, as he himself defined it, he clearly disassociated himself from Stalinism, in short, from what Leninism had become. Bukharin, as a leader of the Party, was as much responsible for the practical evolution of the Party as was Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin. Trotsky and Bukharin blindly played up to the party/bureaucracy contradiction, while Stalin recognized it

and used it to his personal advantage. Gramsci's critique of Bukharin's Popular Manual represents an implicit critique of Bukharin's praxis and the Leninist Party. As such, Gramsci's critique is a clue to an explanation of the party-bureaucracy contradiction and Stalin's heinous solution.

CHAPTER VI

THE POLITICS OF POSITIVISM AND DIALECTICS: ITS MEANING TODAY

Marx's theory of ideology is the foundation upon which I have examined Bukharin's praxis during NEP and Gramsci's immanent critique of that praxis. Based upon our discussion it is clear than an incorrect understanding of Marx's theory of ideology could have a dangerous impact upon one's praxis, depending of course upon the importance of one's leadership in the formation of a new historic bloc. Any group involved in a revolutionary project which claims origin with the philosophy of praxis should therefore take as its starting point an understanding of Marx's theory of ideology, or if you will Gramsci's theory of hegemony. This understanding should account for specific cultural, historical and political forms in the country under question. Praxis should involve a cultural as well as a political project. Praxis, however, must identify those elementary emotions, the embryonic struggle as it exists at the moment, in the life of the subaltern classes themselves. Anything less is a contemporary form of blatant opportunism or left-wing sectarianism. The opportunists would have us feel but not think; the sectarians would have us think but not feel. Both will fail in their project.

Aside from the historically entrenched Marxist-Leninist Parties,[1] contemporary opportunists include those marxist social scientists who fancy positivism.[2] They breathe a redundant simplification of philosophy of praxis because their "knowledge" informs them of the not too complex minds of the dominated classes. Their failure lies precisely in the fact

that they assume it necessary to make philosophy of praxis common sense for the mass. This is blantant chauvinism, opportunism. They condescend the mass. Their failure in praxis is inevitable since they assume that the mass will logically choose socialism once it sees the light. Perhaps they themselves can't see the light for all the smoke fuming from their ivory towers.

Contemporary sectarian organizations include the multi-form and recently emerged Marxist-Leninist Parties. Although many in number, their organizational structure clings dogmatically to the exact reading of polemics several decades old. They read and re-read Lenin to make sure they have the nationalism question right. It is interesting, though, that they converge with the opportunists on the question of knowledge -- they have it and will lead the masses to socialism. Their failure in praxis is equally inevitable since they assume correct line will lead a passive mass into revolution.

What is left? Perhaps the correct question should be what is left of the left? When you take away the flowery illusions of teachers in their ivory towers and the party organizations from emotionally unbalanced Marxist-Leninist misfits, what is left? Real life struggle remains; on-going struggle, despite its setbacks and sometimes incoherent national character, remains to confront bourgeois hegemony in the United States. A fellow comrade has answered this best.

> In 1968 there was no energy crisis, runaway inflation, stagnating economy, chemical and radioactive poisoning of the earth, air and water. Or rather they were not issues, although they were there, either actually or potentially and predictably.

> We learned about them, how they affect us, how dangerous they are and how to fight them because we were kicked out of the political parties, denied the positions within the System, purged from the ivory towers of academia. Banished to living and working on the outside, we had to take a hard and self-interested look at what affected us and our neighbors. We had to support our neighbors and seek their support through our own small, local organizations. We had to replace the fraternity of protest with a real community of resistance. We had to replace the loss of government and corporate-controlled centers of learning by carrying learning, music, art and poetry in our back pockets, sharing and supporting them any way we could. We found out that Culture was not something that was locked up at night in a library, but the life of a people. We found that Environment was not just an empty, "unspoiled" wilderness, but the health, life and joy of people. We learned that the mere redistribution of wealth, power and privilege within a system that dehumanizes the people under it, that denies their worth or worthy effort, was insufficient, even impossible, without radically changing or abolishing the system itself.
>
> We have not given up. We have not gone away. The struggles of the last ten years were worthwhile, not only for the sake of the victories won, but also for the sake of the defeats and the growth and learning made necessary by those defeats.[3]

In recent years, an active interest in Bukharin has developed. Western scholars have begun an extensive revision of official Soviet historiography. A reassessment of Bukharin's role in Soviet history is included in this revision. Today there is a movie in Italy, a play in Britain, and many books and articles which explicitly recognize Bukharin's alternative. The development of Eurocommunism with its gradual mixture of socialist and capitalist relations, and pluralistic democratic approaches converges with the Bukharinist spirit.[4] A similar interest in Gramsci, it appears, has developed with the multiple publication of his works, and books about the man, in many different languages.

The development of these two interests provides a renewed meaning for the critically inclined democratic movements in the West. On the one hand, we are able to restate our historic relationship with the Bolshevik Revolution since it no longer implies Stalinism. We can identify with Bukharin's alternative because it denies the essentially Stalinist features of the contemporary structure of the Soviet Union.[5] On the other hand, we are able to reassess the meaning of marxism as it relates to our revolutionary project in the West. Gramsci's interpretation of marxism offers us an alternative to the dogmatically entrenched Marxist-Leninist parties in the West. In my opinion, we should find a good deal of refurbished spirit in our studies of Bukharin and Gramsci. We should not, however, locate our own project in the works of these two historic revolutionary figures. While we may find a great spiritual identification with the struggles of these two men, we should not read their works with the intent of implementing one of their ideas as the correct marxism. As Gramsci once said, marxism is a living project.

NOTES

Chapter I

1. Throughout the thesis I intentionally refuse to capitalize marxism in the belief that doing such allows me spiritual breathing space from the "official Marxism" of the Soviet Union.

2. Robert C. Tucker, "Stalinism as Revolution From Above," in his edited collection Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation, W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York, 1977.

3. See especially Stephen F. Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888-1938, Vintage Books, New York, 1975; and Moshe Lewin, Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic Debates: From Bukharin to the Modern Reformers, Princeton, 1974.

4. For a highly stimulating use of concrete material to construct a model for Stalin's "revolution from above," see Alvin Gouldner, "Stalinism: A Study of Internal Colonialism," Telos, Vol. 10, No. 4, Winter, 1977-1978, p. 5-48.

Chapter II

1. Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in Marx-Engels Reader (ed.) Robert C. Tucker, W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York, 1972, p. 437.

2. Ibid., p. 189.

3. Ibid., p. 118. Throughout this chapter I distinguish between the early and later Marx. In my opinion, the work which distinguishes clearly the early and later Marx is the Theses on Feuerbach, written in the Spring of 1845 while he was in Brussels. He also wrote The German Ideology during his short stay in Brussels, but Theses on Feuerbach was written after it and is a succinct statement of Marx's break with Feuerbach. Theses on Feuerbach was not publised until 1888 when Engels included it in his book Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy. On this subject the following works are best: David McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx (MacMillan, London, 1969), The Thought of Karl Marx (Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1971), and Karl Marx: His Life and Thought (Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1973); Auguste Cornu, The Origins of Marxian Thought (Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1957); Roger Garaudy, Karl Marx: The Evolution of His Thought

(International Publishers, New York, 1967); Sidney Hook, From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1962); and Robert C. Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx (Cambridge University Press, 1961).

4. Ibid., p. 129.

5. Richard Lichtman, "Marx's Theory of Ideology," Socialist Revolution, Vol. 5, No. 1, April, 1975, p. 50.

6. Furthermore, Engels once commented about The German Ideology in the "Foreword" to Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy: "Before sending these lines to press I have once again ferreted out and looked over the old manuscript of 1845-46. The section dealing with Feuerbach is not completed. The finished portion consists of an exposition of the materialist conception of history which proves only how incomplete our knowledge of economic history still was at that time." (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 6. Engels originally wrote this on February 21, 1888 - after Marx's death). One should thus be scrupulously careful in taking anything that Marx wrote prior to Theses on Feuerbach or in taking The German Ideology to be Marx's theory of ideology. Neither Lichtman nor Mepham point this out.

7. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, International Publishers, New York, 1975, p. 178.

8. Edward Andrew, "Marx's Theory of Classes: Science and Ideology," Canadian Journal of Political Science, 8: 454-66, September, 1975, p. 463.

9. Tucker, op cit., p. 136-7.

10. Ibid., p. 351.

11. John Mepham, "The Theory of Ideology in Capital," Working Papers in Cultural Studies, No. 6, Russell Press Ltd., Nottingham, 1975, p. 100.

12. Quoted in Lichtman, op cit., p. 55-6.

13. Ibid., p. 56.

14. V. I. Lenin, What Is To Be Done, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1975, p. 49.

15. Marx, op cit., p. 72.

16. Mepham, op cit., p. 107.

17. Ibid., p. 106.

18. Communist Manifesto, op cit., p. 343.

19. Karl Marx, Grundrisse, Vintage Books, New York, 1973, p. 85.

20. Lichtman, op cit., p. 63-64

Chapter III

1. Quoted by Thomas R. Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony, Journal of the History of Ideas, 36, 2 (April-June, 1975), p. 358.

2. Ibid., p. 355.

3. It seems that the work of Milovan Djilús, The New Class, (Frederick A Praeger Publisher, New York, 1966), begins with this assumption. Stalin's revolution gave structural recognition to a new class which occupied the bureaucracy.

4. The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, op. cit., p. 437.

5. In Chapter V, I develop this point further.

6. James R. Millar and Alec Nove, "Was Stalin Really Necessary? A Debate on Collectivization," Problems of Communism, July-August, 1976, Vol. 25, No. 4, p. 56; and Alec Nove, An Economic History of the U.S.S.R., (London, 1969), p. 106.

7. Quoted by Tucker in "Stalinism As Revolution from Above," op. cit., p. 80.

8. Nove, Ibid., p. 124. In Millar and Nove, Nove states, "we must begin with the fact that peasant attitudes really went back to medieval time." p. 56.

9. Moshe Lewin calls it the "clash...between...two nations or civilizations..." in "The Social Background of Stalinism," Stalinism, (ed.) Tucker, op. cit., p. 122. Tucker argues similarly: "The NEP Russia that emerged from the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917-21 could be described as a society with two uneasily coexisting cultures.", op. cit., p. 80.

10. Adam B. Ulam, A History of Soviet Russia, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1976, p. 48.

11. Lewin, Ibid., p. 114.

12. See Stephen F. Cohen, "Stalin's Revolution Reconsidered," Slavic Review, Vol. 32, No. 2, June, 1973, p. 267, where he outlines three aspects to consider in the struggle of 1928-29. He argues that Bukharin did have organizational power and that Stalin's supporters were not mere mindless sychophants. The war scare and grain crisis were apparently not enough to favor Stalin either. The important factor, Cohen says, is the social-psychological factor. See also, Stephen F. Cohen, Bukharin, op. cit., Chapter 9. Reviews of Cohen's book may be found in: P. Ferdinand, "From Bolshevik Revolutionary to Bolshevik Reformist," Government and Opposition, Vol. 10, No. 4, Autumn, 1975, p. 496-504; and Alfred G. Meyer, "The Coming of the Iron Age," Soviet Union, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1975, p. 81-93 (Meyer also reviews Tucker's Stalin As Revolutionary 1879-1929: A Study in History and Personality and Ulam's Stalin: The Man and His Era).

13. I expand upon this point in Chapter V, especially as it relates to positivism.

14. Lewin, op. cit., p. 129.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 119 and p. 120.

17. Collected Works, Vol. 33, (Moscow, 1966), p. 474.

18. Ibid., p. 475.

19. Nove, op. cit., p. 86.

20. Ibid., p. 87.

21. Roy A. Medvedev, Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism, (New York, 1971), p. 39.

22. Nove, op. cit., p. 93.

23. Ibid., p. 93-95.

24. Ibid., p. 95.

25. Naum Jasny, Soviet Economists of the Twenties--Names to be Remembered, (Cambridge, 1972), p. 22.

26. David S. Law, "The Left Opposition in 1923," Critique, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1973, p. 37.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., p. 38.

29. Ibid.

30. Cohen, Bukharin, op. cit., p. 173-174.

31. Alexander Erlich, The Soviet Industrialization Debate, 1924-1928, (Cambridge, 1960), p. 21.

32. Quoted by Cohen, Bukharin, op cit., p. 171.

33. These long range implications seem overly simplified. I do not, however, deny the importance of the methods used to achieve Bukharin's praxis. It is in the methods, which include the members, the bureaucracy, and the culture of the Communist Party where Bukharin's praxis failed. I develop this point further in Chapter V.

34. Medvedev, op. cit., p. 54.

35. In my opinion, this factor of unity vs. division is of major importance in distinguishing Stalinism from Lenin's concept of the party. For Lenin, divergence within the party was met with a greater emphasis upon unity, whereas, for Stalin, divergence was met with expulsion.

36. Cohen, Bukharin, op. cit., p. 210-211.

37. Nove, op. cit., p. 136.

38. Lewin, Political Undercurrents, op. cit., p. 49.

39. Erlich, The Soviet Industrialization, op. cit., p. 79.

40. Cohen, Bukharin, op. cit., p. 351.

41. Medvedev, op. cit., p. 62.

42. Quoted by Lewin, Political Undercurrents, op. cit., p. 63.

43. Medvedev, op cit., p. 65

44. See Stalin, Works, Vol. XI, p. 57-67. It is perhaps incorrect to call this a theory. Cohen calls it "Stalin's murderous thesis" with which I concur. (p. 281 of Bukharin, op. cit.).

45. Cohen, op. cit., p. 282.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Quoted by Cohen, Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., p. 285.

50a. Bukharin-Kamenev Meeting, July 1928, trans. by George Saunders, in Dissent, Winter, 1979, p. 83.

51. Ibid., p. 288-289.

52. Ibid., p. 332. Cohen's point here is that this helps explain why Stalin had to purge so many party members.

53. Ibid., p. 322.

54. Ibid., p. 323-324.

55. Ibid., p. 324.

56. Ibid.

57. "Lenin, in his "Testament," assessed Bukharin as "not only the most valuable and biggest theoretician of the Party, but (he) also may legitimately be considered the favorite of the whole Party; but his theoretical views can only with the very greatest doubt be regarded as fully Marxist, for there is something scholastic in him (he never has learned, and I think never has fully understood, the dialectic).""" quoted from "Lenin's Testament," The New Leader (New York, 1962), p. 567, by David Hoffman, "Bukharin's Theory of Equilibrium," Telos, No. 14, Winter, 1972, p. 128. For a ludicrous and senile attempt to extrapolate Lenin's quip about Bukharin's dialectics see, Richard B. Day, "Dialectical Method in the Political Writings of Lenin and Bukharin," Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 9, No. 2, June, 1976, p. 244-260. Day's reasoning is filled with erroneous information about the relationship between Lenin and Bukharin. For a more reasonable treatment of this relationship see, Stephen F. Cohen, "Bukharin, Lenin, and the Theoretical Foundations of Bolshevism," Soviet Studies (Great Britian), Vol. 21, No. 4, 1970, p. 436-457. Cohen not only deals with several Bukharin--Lenin controversies but establishes Bukharin's important role in helping form Bolshevik ideology. Obviously, I am suggesting that Lenin's legacy fell upon Bukharin's shoulders. Some scholars support this assessment, others don't. Most notable among those who support the argument are Cohen, Lewin, Tucker, and Nove. Less notable among those who don't support the argument are Sidney Hook, "A Bolshevik Reconsidered: The Case of Comrade Bukharin," Encounter, Vol. 43, No. 6, December, 1974, p. 81-92, where after reading Lenin's last five works, he states, "I do not find Bukharin's program in them either implicitly or explicitly." (p. 86).

He also states in his typically reactionary tone; "Among the things we can learn are the probable costs and consequences of forcibly attempting to introduce socialism in underdeveloped countries." (p. 92). While there are things to learn from this period, it has absolutely nothing to do with Hook's claim. But of course it is up to me to suggest what can be learned. I do this in my conclusion. Richard B. Day argues that "the only satisfactory answer to Stalin was that given by Trotsky..." in "Preobrazhensky and the Theory of the Transition Period," Soviet Studies Vol. 27, No. 2, April, 1975, p. 218. See also his article in Canadian Journal of Political Science, op. cit., p. 260.

58. Lenin used Imperialism and World Economy for his own Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism and Bukharin's "Theory of the Imperialist State" for his State and Revolution. This alone suggests that Lenin placed a great deal of respect in Bukharin's theoretical work.

59. Originally published in 1921 under this title. It is now published in English as Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology (Ann Arbor, 1971).

60. See for example, Imperialism and World Economy (New York, 1966), p. 87-88; Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital (New York, 1972), ed. by Kenneth J. Tarbuck, p. 154, 157, 160, 174, 202, and 232. It is notably absent though from The Economic Theory of the Leisure Class (New York, 1968--originally written in the fall of 1914 and first published in February of 1919 in the Soviet Union), where he critiques the Austrian, Historical, and Anglo-American Schools of Economics for their "bourgeois caricature" of marxism. It is also absent from his "Theory and Practice From the Standpoint of Dialectical Materialism," in Science At the Cross Roads. Papers presented to the International Congress of the History of Science and Technology held in London June 29 to July 31, 1931 by the Delegates of the U.S.S.R., (London, 1971 , second ed.). See also Bukharin's, "Marx's Techniques and Its Historical Importance," in Marxism and Modern Thought, trans. by Ralph Fox, Hyperion Press Inc., Westport, Connecticut, 1935, p. 1-90. For an interesting article about the Bolsheviks in London in 1931 see Colin Holmes, "Bukharin in England," Soviet Studies, Vol. 24, No. 1, July, 1972, p. 86-90. Common to each of these works by Bukharin is his objectivist and positivist interpretation of Marx. I deal with this at a later point in the paper.

61. For an excellent explanation of the intellectual currents involved in Bukharin's mechanistic marxism see, Stephen F. Cohen, "Marxist Theory and Bolshevik Policy: The Case of Bukharin's Historical Materialism," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 85, No. 1, March, 1970, p. 40-60. (also contained in Cohen Bukharin, op. cit., Chapter 4); see also Hoffman, op. cit.

62. Bukharin, Historical Materialism, op. cit., p. 88. He states, "No doubt society has much in common with an organism; but it also has much in common with a mechanism. These traits, precisely, are the traits of any true totality, any system." (p. 88). This statement is aimed specifically at Comte and Spencer. Other sociologists who he critiques: Levy-Bruhl (p. 204); Simmel (p. 209); Michels and Pareto (p. 310). Others include Durkheim, Weber, and Bogdanov.

63. Hoffman, op. cit., p. 128. The term, organic, has a different meaning in marxism than it does in sociology. Both of the sociological concepts, mechanical and organic, refer more to analogy and less to concrete phenomenon. This has to do with sociology's dependence upon the natural sciences. Thus, society is spoken of with reference to physical and biological phenomena; hence, the terms mechanistic and organismic. In marxism, however, the same terms refer to the nature of human activity. Mechanical refers to human activity which is, simply, a passive reflection of structural forces. Organic, on the other hand, refers to human activity which consciously manifests in structural forces. Consider, for a moment, the structure of education in society, and the activity of school children. The question is: What is the relationship between a child's activity and the educational structure? From a mechanical perspective, we might argue that the educational structure causes the child to behave in a certain manner. The structure is the cause and the behavior is the effect. From an organic perspective, we might argue that the child's behavior manifests in the educational structure. There is no cause-effect relationship in this view. In my opinion, this is the correct dialectical view, since human activity is central and not determined. Bukharin uses the terms in a sociological sense, but the fact remains that he is a mechanical philosopher.

64. Cohen, Bukharin, op. cit., p. 118.

65. Bukharin, Historical Materialism, op. cit., p. 14.

66. Cohen, Bukharin, op. cit., p. 112.

67. Engels popularization works include: Dialectics of Nature, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, Anti-Duhring, and The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.

68. A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, (Moscow, 1970), p. 20-21. It was first published as Kritik in Germany in 1859.

69. Bukharin, Historical Materialism, op. cit., p. 73.

70. Ibid., p. 79.

71. Ibid., p. 241.

72. Ibid., p. 108.

73. Ibid., p. 105.

74. Ibid., p. 108.

75. Ibid., p. 89.

76. Ibid., p. 111.

77. Ibid., p. 89.

78. See for example, The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 in The Marx-Engels Reader, op. cit., where Marx says, "The worker can create nothing without nature, without the sensuous external world. It is the material on which his labor is manifested, in which it is active, from which and by means of which it produces." (p. 58). See also Thesis 1 in Theses on Feuerbach where Marx says, "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism--that of Feuerbach included--is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively.", Ibid., p. 107.

79. See for example, Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit., where Marx again affirms the importance of human subjectivity in relation to the mundane world. He says, "A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labor-process we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement." (p. 178).

80. Bukharin, Historical Materialism, op. cit., p. 90.

81. Ibid., p. 116.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid., p. 136.

84. Ibid., p. 143.

85. Ibid., p. 208.

86. Ibid., p. 158.

87. Ibid., p. 220.

88. Marx shuddered at the formulation of economic determinism. See footnote 1, p. 81 of Capital, Vol. 1, where Marx responds to a critique of his A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. He says: "In the estimation of that paper, my view that each special mode of production and the social relations corresponding to it, in short, that the economic structure of society, is the real basis on which the juridical and political superstructure is raised, and to which definite social forms of thought correspond; that the mode of production determines the character of the social, political, and intellectual life generally, all this is very true for our own times, in which material interests preponderate, but not for the middle ages, in which Catholicism, nor for Athens and Rome, where politics, reigned supreme. In the first place it strikes one as an odd thing for any one to suppose that these well-worn phrases about middle ages and the ancient world are unknown to anyone else. This much, however, is clear, that the middle ages could not live on Catholicism, nor the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, it is the mode in which they gained a livelihood that explains why here politics, and there Catholicism, played the chief part. For the rest, it requires but a slight acquaintance with the history of the Roman republic, for example, to be aware that its secret history is the history of its landed property. On the other hand, Don Quixote long ago paid the penalty for wrongly imagining that knight errantry was compatible with all economic forms of society."

89. Bukharin, Historical Materialism, op. cit., p. 243.

90. Ibid., p. 243.

91. Ibid., p. 249.

92. Ibid.

93. Cohen, "Marxist Theory and...," op. cit., p. 56.

94. Cohen, Bukharin, op. cit., p. 109. One rather infuriating article by Day, "Dialectical Method...," op. cit., attempts to link Bukharin's Historical Materialism to his praxis in the 20's in this way: "... the work represented a significant departure in Bukharin's thinking, facilitating his rapid movement from the party's extreme "left" wing during War Communism to its extreme "right" wing during the years of NEP." (p. 252). As I stated before, the same equilibrium model was present in each of his works, so it wasn't a change of thinking, but rather a change in the social context. For three invigorating, and highly imaginative critiques of Bukharin's Historical Materialism see the following: the first and classic critique is, of course, Georg Lukacs, "Technology and Social Relations," New Left Review, No. 39, September/October, 1966, p. 27-34; the one I use for my own critique because it really deals most closely with the concrete implications

of Bukharin's positivism is, Antonio Gramsci, "Critical Notes On An Attempt at Popular Sociology," Prison Notebooks, (ed.) by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, International Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 419-472; and for an excellent expose of Bukharin's theoretical orientation see, Hoffman, op. cit., p. 126-136.

95. Sidney Heitman, "The Myth of Bukharin's Anarchism," The Rocky Mountain Social Science Journal, April, 1963, p. 40.

96. Cohen, "Bukharin, Lenin, and...," op. cit., p. 457.

97. For an excellent article on this subject see, Robert V. Daniels, "The Withering Away of the State in Theory and Practice," in Soviet Society: A Book of Readings, (eds.) Alex Inkeles and Kent Geiger, Boston, 1961), p. 113-126.

98. Stephen F. Cohen, "Premonitions of Stalinism," Dissent, Winter, 1979, p. 80.

99. Bukharin-Kamenev Meeting, July 1928, op. cit., p. 85.

Chapter IV

1. The best work on Bukharin's life is, Cohen, Bukharin, op. cit., Chapter I. I rely heavily upon Cohen's work.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

3. Quoted by Cohen, Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 8.

6. Quoted by Cohen, p. 8.

7. Ibid., p. 9.

8. Ibid., p. 12.

9. This incident was a source of conflict between Bukharin and Lenin between 1911 and 1917. Bukharin, believing that Malinovskii was an Okrana spy, wanted Lenin to dismiss him from the party. Lenin, however, refused to believe these accusations. In 1917, police archives revealed the truth of Bukharin's suspicions.

10. Giuseppe Fiori, Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary, Trans. by Tom Nairn, Schocken Books, New York, 1973. Fiori is the primary biographical source for Gramsci; the following offer supporting material: Thomas Ashby, "Sardinia," Encyclopedia Briticanica, 11th Edition, 1910, p. 210-217, for socio-geographical information on Sardinia at the time; John M. Cammett, Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism, Stanford U. Press, Stanford, Cal., 1967; Alastair Davidson, Antonio Gramsci: Towards An Intellectual Biography, Humanities Press, New Jersey, 1977; James Joll, Gramsci; Penquin Modern Masters, 1977; A. Pozzolini, Antonio Gramsci: An Introduction to His Thought, Pluto Press, 1970 (Trans. by Anne F. Showstack).

11. Louis Marks states in his Introduction to The Modern Prince..."In 1910 Gramsci left Sardinia after winning a scholarship and went to Turin where he enrolled himself at the University in the faculty of Letters." (p. 11). Marks incorrectly dates Gramsci at Turin. The correct date is 1911. Cammett (Ibid.) writes that Gramsci "attended the Liceo Giovanni Maria Dettori" in Cagliari from 1908 to 1911. (p. 8). See also Fiori (p. 69).

11a. Cohen, Bukharin, op cit., p. 9.

12. For an excellent argument along these lines, see Paul Piccone, "Gramsci's Hegelian Marxism," Political Theory, Vol. 2, No. 1, February, 1974, p. 32-45. The other 2 Hegelian marxists, Piccone claims, are Karl Korsch and Georg Lukács.

13. Gwyn A. Williams, Proletarian Order: Antonio Gramsci, Factory Councils and the Origins of Communism in Italy 1911-1921, Pluto Press, London, 1975, p. 91. See also the following where Williams suggests a convergence between Gramsci and Sorel, especially the themes of "Sorelian contempt for democracy," (p. 152 and 218); "Sorelian myth" (p. 182); "identification of the producer with producer of history," (p. 118); "emphasis on production, with its heavy, Sorelian, 'morality-of-the producer' overtones," (p. 133); and finally p. 340 where he suggests that "Sorel needs to be re-assessed and re-possessed." On Sorel, see James H. Meisel, The Geneisis of Georges Sorel, The George Wahr Publishing Company, Ann Arbor, 1951; Irving Louis Horowitz, Radicalism and the Revolt Against Reason: The Social Theories of Georges Sorel, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1961.

14. The quote is taken from The Communist Party (4 September 1920) as translated by Williams, Ibid., p. 225. L'Ordine Nuovo (The New Order) originated out of Turin on May 1, 1919 by four young men, Angelo Tasca, Umberto Terracini, Palmiro Togliatti, and Antonio Gramsci. "It proclaimed itself a journal of the Third International dedicated to the construction of the communist state and incorporation of Italy into the new communist civilization." (Williams, Ibid., p. 90). Williams, however, tends to overestimate Sorel's early

influence and ignores Gramsci's rather unappreciative remarks found in his prison letters. In a letter to his sister-in-law, Tanya, in 1932, Gramsci writes "Croce's writings on the theory of history provided the intellectual weapons for two extremely important movements of "revisionism" of the time: that of Edouard Bernstein in Germany and that of Sorel in France." (Antonio Gramsci, "Benedetto Croce and His Concept of Liberty," Science and Society, Vol. 10, No. 3, Summer, 1946, p. 285). Althouth he locates Croce as the cultural leader of the European revisionist movement, Gramsci disdains the intimacy between Croce and Sorel. "As for the intimate bond between Sorel and Croce, that is a matter of common knowledge, but how deep and tenacious a bond it was became particularly apparent upon the publication of Sorel's letters, where he is frequently seen subordinating himself to Croce in a surprising manner." (Ibid.).

15. Horowtiz, op. cit., p. 51.

16. Sorel's practical-organizational influence upon the Italian working class was evident in the formation of the USI - Unione Sindacale Italiana (Italian Syndicalist Union). USI was founded by revolutionary syndicalists in 1912. It rivaled the CGL - General Confederation of Labor, which was the traditional representative organization of the Italian working class.

17. Edmund E. Jacobitti, "Labriola, Croce, and Italian Marxism (1895-1910)," Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 36, April-June, 1975, p. 300.

18. Ibid., p. 302.

19. Ibid., p. 300.

20. Ibid., p. 301. Jacobitti probably overstates the case for "Mazzinian anarchic sentimentalism" in defining early socialism. Williams claims, and quite correctly I maintain, that a "fundamental denial of the anarchoid...defined socialism in Italy." (op. cit., p. 28).

21. H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought 1890-1930, Vintage Books, New York, 1961, p. 63.

22. Ibid., p. 37.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., p. 38-39.

25. Ibid., p. 66.

26. Jacobitti, op. cit., p. 314.

27. Dennis Mack Smith, "Benedetto Croce: History and Politics," Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 8, No. 1, January, 1973, p. 43.

28. Ibid., p. 42.

29. Gramsci, "Benedetto Croce...," op. cit., p. 285-287.

30. Dante Germino, "The Radical as Humanist: Gramsci, Croce, and the Philosophy of Praxis," Bucknell Review, Vol. 20, No. 1, Spring, 1972, p. 93.

31. Jacobitti, op. cit., p. 298.

32. Germino, op. cit., p. 108.

33. Alberto Martinelli, "In Defense of the Dialectic: Antonio Gramsci's Theory of Revolution," Berkeley Journal of Sociology, 13-14, 1968-9, p. 2.

34. Williams, op. cit., p. 46.

35. Ibid., p. 48.

36. Ibid., p. 49.

37. Ibid., p. 48.

38. Ibid., p. 48. Quoted by Williams from Fiori.

39. Ibid., p. 50.

40. Ibid.

41. During his stay in Moscow, Gramsci met his future wife, Julia, as well as many Bolsheviks.

42. Cammett, op. cit. p. 182.

43. Antonio Gramsci, Selections From Political Writings 1910-1920, Ed. by Quinton Hoare, trans. by John Mathews, International Publishers, New York, 1977, p. 34. This article was originally published in Avanti! (24 December 1917). See also History, Philosophy, and Culture in the Young Gramsci, ed. by Pedro Cavalcanti and Paul Piccone, Telos Press, St. Louis, 1975, p. 123. Piccone translates the passage somewhat differently and he differs with Hoare on the actual publication date of the article in Avanti!. Piconne notes it as November 24, 1917 rather than December 24, 1917. In their edition Cavalcanti and Piccone present several articles by Gramsci under the general heading "Problems of the Russian Revolution." (Part V).

44. Williams, op. cit., p. 61.

45. Ibid., p. 31, p. 91.

46. Ibid., p. 62.

47. Ibid., p. 92, p. 272. Despite William's admission of the fact that Gramsci and the Italians were mistaken about Lenin and the events in Russia, he infuses his interpretation of Gramsci with his own Leninism. In March, 1920 Gramsci wrote "Governing Party and Governing Class." Williams distills the essence of this article: "It is, in essence, an application of Lenin's State and Revolution. There is internal evidence from other writings of Gramsci's that State and Revolution registered fully in his thinking during this period" (p. 188, author's emphasis). He offers little proof to support his argument. Although we never find anything but glowing admiration for Lenin in Gramsci's writing, we cannot find anything constituting "internal evidence...that State and Revolution registered fully" in Gramsci's thinking. Lenin is not mentioned once in the article.

Lenin's works were being translated and circulated in Italy during the 1920's. (Cammett, op. cit., p. 59). It is quite probable then that Gramsci was aware of State and Revolution. To maintain, however, that this little book of Russian polemic had registered fully in Gramsci's thinking is another matter. This argument overlooks two important features of Gramsci's thinking. First, what may be considered Gramscian thought was not so easily and immediately adopted from sources outside Italy. Gramsci's Crocean thought matured over many years, and that was in the familiar Italian. Yet Williams would have us believe Leninism registered fully with Gramsci in a short period of time. Bah! Second, the time period under question was a revolutionary one, just as it had been when Lenin wrote State and Revolution. In a crisis such as this an intellectual responds more to immediate practical concerns than to long range goals. (Even though their writing may be cast in somewhat utopian speculation such as State and Revolution.) Thus, Gramsci's immediate concern with the Italian Revolution reflected a similarity to Lenin's concern with the October Revolution, but certainly not an internalization of Leninism. Their situations were defined by a similar historical problematic. (On this point, see Piccone's and Adler's interview with Massimo L. Salvadori, "Eurocommunism and-or Eurosocialism: An Interview With Massimo L. Salvadori," Telos, No. 38, Winter, 1978-79, p. 119-124).

None of this is to argue that Gramsci was not influenced by Lenin. Nor is it to argue that Gramsci's writing during 'Bienno Rosso' reflected certain Leninist passions. Indeed, Gramsci's passion was inspired by Lenin's achievement. But Gramsci was not a Leninist.

48. These notes are published in English under the title, "Critical Notes on An Attempt at Popular Sociology," contained in Prison Notebooks, op. cit., Fiori states that Gramsci wrote these notes in 1929-1930. (op. cit., p. 246).

49. Prison censorship forced Gramsci into an unconventional terminology. In this case, philosophy of praxis is marxism.

50. Prison Notebooks, op. cit., p. 406.

51. Ibid., p. 434, p. 437 and p. 407 respectively.

52. Ibid., p. 407.

53. Ibid., p. 408.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid., p. 433.

56. Unfortunately, Gramsci does not suggest who among the great intellectuals should be critiqued. This criticism is without foundation when examined in light of Bukharin's total publication. For example, Bukharin demonstrates acute facility in his critique of the Austrian school of marginal economics. Can one think of a truer rival in the bourgeois camp during the early part of this century? See Bukharin's The Economic Theory of the Leisure Class, op. cit. For this reason, I think Gramsci would have us turn this critique back upon himself. In fact, if I may speculate, Gramsci possibly wrote this critique into his notes with the hope that someone would do exactly that.

57. Prison Notebooks, op. cit., p. 439.

58. Bukharin, "Theory and Practice From the Standpoint of Dialectical Materialism," op. cit.

    Bukharin attempted to reconcile views expressed in Historical Materialism with criticism leveled at him by Lukács and Deborin. With the above presentation, he discussed marxism as dialectical materialism rather than historical materialism. However, as Gramsci points out, Bukharin "does not seem to have changed his position, even after the great debate which apparently, or so it would appear from the text presented at the London Congress, resulted in his repudiating the book." (Prison Notebooks, op. cit., p. 435). Bukharin made one more attempt in his presentation to the Academy of Sciences of USSR in 1933. See chapter by Bukharin in Ralph Fox, (ed.) Marxism and Modern Thought, op. cit.

59. Prison Notebooks, op. cit., p. 440.

60. The absolutely implicit line of argument in this point must be and will be developed in Chapter V.

61. It seems to me entirely possible for two individuals to develop radically different praxis, and therefore different supportive ideology, from a very similar philosophical tendency. Specifically, I refer to the fact that both Stalin and Bukharin were mechanistic philosophers, but their praxis was, of course, demonstrably different; Bukharin's praxis involved NEP evolutionism while Stalin's praxis invoked voluntaristic war communism. Each by the way supported their praxis with different ideologies; Bukharin's equilibrium theory and Stalin's theory of increasing class struggle.

62. I am, of course, referring to Gramsci's contribution to Eurocommunism.

63. Prison Notebooks, op. cit., p. 435, and p. 419, respectively. The second theme will be taken up in Chapter V.

64. Ibid., p. 434. I will also deal with the second reason, which Gramsci calls the psychological, in Chapter V.

65. Ibid., p. 435.

66. At this juncture, it seems to me, Gramsci connects historiography with human action (or in other words, the first and second themes).

67. Prison Notebooks, op cit., p. 435.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., p. 436.

70. Ibid., p. 456.

71. Ibid., p. 435.

72. Ibid., p. 425.

73. Ibid., p. 431.

74. Ibid., p. 433. In this passage, Gramsci anticipates Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions.

75. Ibid. Implicit in this point, I believe, is Gramsci's polemic with Bukharin's revisionism. His revisionism is related to his leadership and as such will be discussed in Chapter V.

76. Ibid., p. 434.

77. Ibid., p. 456-457.

78. This possibly explains why so many western scholars have noted that Bukharin's theory of equilibrium converges with the 'norm of reciprocity' in the West. It is not simply that equilibrium has one definition over its historical use, but rather that equilibrium is conceived in bourgeois terms. However, these scholars fail to grasp this significance.

79. Prison Notebooks, op. cit., p. 431.

80. Ibid., p. 432. One should note the convergence between Gramsci's orientation and mine as expressed in Chapter II.

81. Ibid., p. 437.

82. Ibid., p. 439.

83. Ibid., p. 437.

84. Ibid., p. 427.

85. Ibid., p. 429.

86. Ibid., p. 423-429.

87. Ibid., p. 430.

88. Ibid., p. 446.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid., p. 438.

92. Ibid., p. 445.

93. This second point suggests something about the quality of Bukharin's leadership. I will draw this out in Chapter V.

94. Prison Notebooks, op. cit., p. 469. (My emphasis)

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid., p. 466.

97. Ibid., p. 462.

Chapter V

1. Gramsci, The Modern Prince and Other Writings, op. cit., p. 149. Gramsci makes a similar statement in the Prison Notebooks, op. cit.: "If, therefore, it is demonstrated that contradictions will disappear, it is also demonstrated implicitly that the philosophy of praxis too will disappear, or be superceded." (p. 405).

2. I should anticipate that many readers will find objection to this point. Let me clarify revisionism and orthodoxy. Marxist orthodoxy has been identified historically with an original reading of the texts of Marx's and Engels' work. With this point, I do not quibble. However, the definition of this original reading is where I take issue with most "marxist scholars." They, meaning these marxist scholars, usually equate marxism with system or science. In other words, marxism is a coherent philosophical or scientific system for them. Revisionism, on the other hand, refers to some reinterpretation of the original text which usually results in breaking the logical necessity of the system. Thus, Bukharin is usually referred to as an orthodox marxist since he reads marxism as system. But since marxism is not a system, Bukharin is unorthodox, or more simply revisionist since he revises the original text into a systematic science. Although Gramsci attaches many pejorative phrases to Bukharin's marxism, he never once calls him an orthodox marxist. The editors of the Prison Notebooks as well as many others mistake Bukharin in this sense. See p. 379 of Prison Notebooks where Hoare suggests Bukharin was an orthodox marxist, despite Gramsci's suggestion that the "concept of 'orthodoxy' requires to be renewed and brought back to its authentic origins." (p. 462).

3. Traditional should not be equated with mechanical, although Bukharin was both. Traditional refers to one's thought in relation to the previous world view of the mass. Mechanical refers to the organization of one's thought in relation to human action.

4. Prison Notebooks, op. cit., p. 463.

5. Ibid., p. 462.

6. Ibid., p. 419.

7. Ibid., p. 422.

8. Ibid., p. 419-420.

9. Ibid., p. 423.

10. Ibid., p. 423-424. Gramsci says this is Marx's understanding of common sense in The Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.

11. Ibid., p. 425.

12. Ibid., p. 433.

13. Ibid., p. 420.

14. Ibid., p. 434-435.

15. Ibid., p. 435.

16. Ibid., p. 441.

17. Ibid., p. 441.

18. Ibid., p. 445.

19. Ibid., p. 435.

20. Ibid., p. 418.

21. Alaistair Davidson, Antonio Gramsci: Towards An Intellectual Biography, op. cit., p. 234 and 236.

22. Ibid., p. 89.

23. Ibid., p. 239.

24. Edward Hallett Carr, Foundations of A Planned Economy, 1926-1929, Vol. 3, Pt. 2, London, 1976, p. 535.

25. Davidson, op. cit., p. 240.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., p. 249.

Chapter VI

1. I would include two organizations here: The Communist Party, U.S.A., and the Socialist Party.

2. I have nothing to say for the non-marxist positivists since they do not seem to me to be a real danger. As I have tried to point out, the marxist positivists are the real threat.

3. Eric Steinmetz, "A Look at 1968, now Ten Years Gone," North Country Anvil, No. 29, Winter, 1979, p. 8.

4. See for example, Stephen F. Cohen, "Why Bukharin's Ghost Still Haunts Moscow," The New York Times Magazine, December 10, 1978, Section 6, p. 146-158.

5. See for exaple, Roy Medvedev, "Bukharin's Last Years," New Left Review, No. 109, May-June, 1978, p. 49-73. (Translated by Helen Jamieson).

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THE POLITICS OF POSITIVISM AND DIALECTICS: MARX'S THEORY OF IDEOLOGY AND THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR GRAMSCI'S IMMANENT CRITIQUE OF BUKHARIN'S PRAXIS DURING THE PERIOD OF NEW ECONOMIC POLICY IN THE SOVIET UNION

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Marx's theory of ideology is examined from the perspective that consciousness and material conditions contribute equally to the development of superstructural formations in society. There are four elements in Marx's theory: philosophical, economic, political, and historical. Each of these elements is explored in terms of the 'early' and 'later' Marx. It is asserted that class struggle mediates historical consciousness and production forces, and actively creates the polity and culture. Class struggle is praxis. This understanding of Marx's theory of ideology is used as a philosophical base to examine Nikolai Bukharin's leadership role in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during the period of New Economic Policy. Bukharin interpreted marxism as sociology in his publication, Historical Materialism. In it, Bukharin substituted a positivist methodology for the rational dialectic found in Marx's theory of ideology. In his struggle with Stalin in 1929, Bukharin lost. Bukharin's praxis failed because his political activity was confined within the upper echelons of the party. This is referred to as the party/bureaucracy contradiction. This contradiction is the superstructural manifestation of a structural contradiction between the peasantry and the proletariat. The contradiction is also related to Bukharin's positivism. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian communist, wrote a critique of Bukharin's marxism in 1929. His critique is used to support the author's claim that there is a relationship between Bukharin's

positivism and his failure in praxis during NEP. It is concluded that the current effort to reinterpret Bukharin's role during NEP should derive great inspiration from the man and his efforts rather than his theoretical ideas. In addition, marxist academics and revolutionaries should examine their role in light of the historical context for the politics of positivism and dialectics.